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Wilderness

JULY
2023

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COVER: Winter in the Ruahine Range. See story p30.
PHOTO: Sam Harrison

Resilience, it's in all of us

I'VE NEVER DONE an Outward Bound course, though I have been similarly challenged while at school and through Hillary Outdoors.

Experiences like these, where we are thrown from our comfort zone and must find inner strength to pull through and overcome challenges either alone or in a group, can be transformational. At the heart of such courses is the learning of resilience. We learn that we are capable of so much more than we thought – we are all stronger, mentally and physically, than we realise.

The courses I have attended, at various stages beginning when I was 15 and the last at 28, have often involved misery, but are always fun in hindsight and full of practical outdoor experience.

But the strength of these courses is that, although they are set in the outdoors, the lessons learned can see us through all life challenges. Even to this day, I look back to 15-year-old me on a 10-day school trip to Tongariro National Park where my feet froze in the snow and my tent-mates and I spent a sleepless night battered by gale force winds that flattened every other tent but ours. The memory of the incessant cold, the misery of hiking day after day mixed with the elation of surviving the storm intact and knowing we had done 10 days in the wild, has helped see me through countless life challenges.

Having read Kathy Ombler's feature (p56) about her eight-day Outward Bound course, it seems her experience reflects mine: lots of grumbling, lots of discomfort, and masses of team bonding and personal growth.

That's one reason why, in Outward Bound's 60th year, Wilderness made the organisation one of the charities supported during the 2023 Walk1200km challenge. Participants have been raising money for Outward Bound by completing the challenge and *Wilderness* will be donating at least $600 to the organisation once I finish it in October this year ($1 for every kilometre walked split between Outward Bound and the Mental Health Foundation).

Outward Bound is almost a rite of passage. Many of us know of people who have done a course (or whose kids have done one). And while Outward Bound has necessarily moved with the times in regards to health and safety and accessibility to courses – men only in the beginning, then women and now courses for those with an intellectual or physical disability, migrants and a scholarship programme to ensure courses are available to all New Zealanders – much remains the same. Chiefly, that uncompromising notion that within us is the strength and resilience needed to navigate life's challenges – whatever they may be.

- Alistair Hall
Editor

2022 NZ Post Editor of the Year - MPA Awards

E-newsletter
To get the latest in outdoor news, gear and the latest trip recommendations head to our website and sign up to the *Wilderness* Daily newsletter

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LETTER of THE MONTH

POLAR TRAVEL AND WINTER TRAMPING

Now, I was either in a relaxed, receptive frame of mind, or 'What polar travel can teach us about winter tramping' (June 2023) was a fantastic article. I suspect the latter.

The article's structure – sectioned into staying warm, food and nutrition, sleeping and safety – is refreshingly simple. But within that format, two things struck me.

One was the repetition of the advice from three explorers. We aren't talking about esoteric opinions here, and the consistent advice is not rocket science. This is simple life-saving stuff.

Secondly, all the advice is based around 'what, when and why'. For instance, eating on the go – high energy snacks, starting immediately after breakfast, more calories needed in the cold and the brutal consequences of fatigue and hypothermia in cold weather.

Thank you for the clearest, briefest and most effective article on this subject I have ever read.

– Keith Brockway

DRINKTANKS

Keith receives a Drinktanks Session Growler worth $79.99 from www.gearshop.co.nz. Readers, send your letter to the editor for a chance to win.

PATAGONIA IS BIGGER THAN ONE WALK

Regarding the article 'What I learned tramping in Patagonia' (June 2023), I agree that the W Trek can get very busy, but do not agree on judging Patagonia by only this walk and two other places on the Argentinian side.

UNESCO sets Torres del Paine as the eighth Natural Wonder of the World so it's expected to be very busy. And there are, naturally, restrictions applied to tourists regarding times and capacity. However, Patagonia is much more than Torres del Paine. There are 1.061 million square kilometres to explore and so many other places apart from Torres del Paine where you find yourself alone tramping in the middle of nowhere surrounded only by nature. Patagonia is quiet, wild, gigantic, remote and isolated. The article cannot judge Patagonia by only visiting the W Trek, Laguna los Tres and Perito Moreno.

The article would more appropriately have been titled 'What I learned tramping in the eighth natural wonder of the world'. It is the same as tramping the Milford Track in summer and calling this 'Tramping in New Zealand'.

– Pia Garces

TRACKING WALK1200KM PROGRESS DIGITALLY

Thanks for the inspiration to attempt to walk 1200km in one year. I am now doing it. Always a late adopter I have resisted, as I knew I would be useless at recording my distances manually. I have since discovered the Strava app can set goals weekly, monthly and annually. I have also set up a challenge for my friends to walk 1200km and invited them to participate. Your readers might be interested to know this is a good option if more digitally minded.

– David Short

GREAT READING AND WALKING

I have been a subscriber for many years. *Wilderness* is a great read and getting better every year. About six months ago, my wife Jane was cleaning the coffee table. She glanced at a recent issue and got interested in Walk1200km. She signed up the very next day and has since become obsessed. She is well ahead of the pace and just loves it. We were in Kaikōura on Anzac Day – the walk still had to be done!

– Chris Reid

PATAGONIA IS TRAMPING'S LAST FRONTIER

In 'What I learned tramping in Patagonia', the author compares two of the most remote tramping regions on Earth: Patagonia and New Zealand. I have worked and lived in Chilean Patagonia for two years and I have been a Queenstown local for many more, so I was keen to read this story. I was disappointed to see that the author travelled to Chile and Argentina just to visit the three most popular Instagram spots of Patagonia during peak season and then judge their performance and infrastructure from a very un-Kiwi egotistic pedestal.

Patagonia is four times larger than New Zealand. It boasts a population density that is 10 times smaller. Patagonia is as remote as it gets, wild and sometimes very hostile. Patagonian people, flora and fauna are rugged, always bending but never breaking. Patagonian skies appear vast, its winds feel formidable, its mountains loom larger, and its trees are resilient. The country is temperamental and challenging, it can kill you if you are unprepared or overconfident. It can feel like the last frontier for tramping, and I can't think of a better place to find solitude.

For your next Patagonian tramping adventure I'd suggest going during the shoulder season and looking at Sierra Baguales in Torres del Paine, the Dientes de Navarino in Tierra del Fuego or the Vuelta al Huemul in El Chaltén. Don't forget that in Patagonia, distances are measured in time and the wind embraces people tightly. The author ends his article with a petty rant about queuing to see one of the biggest glaciers on Earth accessible by self-driving a well-paved road and condescendingly assuming that Argentina, currently one of the 30 major economies in the world, is a third-world country.

– Enrique de Azcoitia

BEAUTIFUL VIEWS

I took this photo on a beautiful sunny morning at Lake Ida. I'm 67 years old, retired and loving the Walk1200km challenge, which has given me a further boost to maintain an already healthy outdoor lifestyle. I'm on track with my year-to-date tally at 597km.

– Chris Harbour

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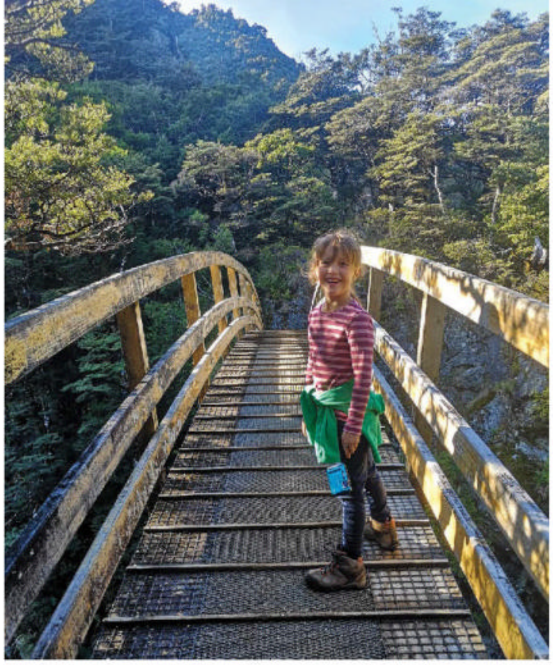
What did you get up to last weekend?

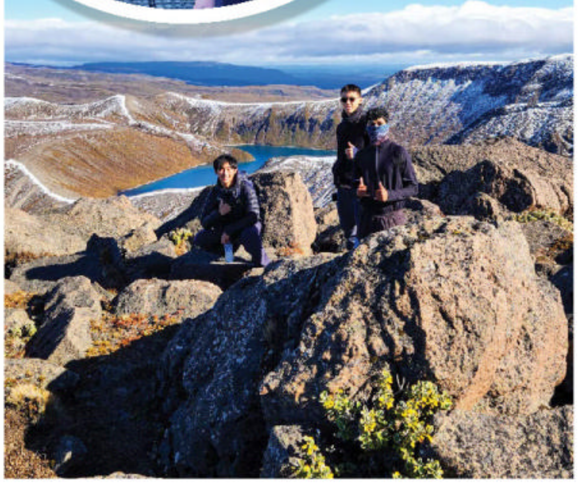


Maggie Keighley tramped to Rangiwahia Hut in Ruahine Forest Park. This time it was a day trip after Maggie had previously spent the night there.

Joy Bryant smiled through the many extremely chilly crossings of Speargrass Creek on the way to Lake Angelus in Nelson Lakes National Park. "It was a perfect autumn trip with friends all of whom are over 70 years old," said Joy.

Paris Short arranged a permit to take her dog Rocket to Port Craig Hut on the South Coast Track in Fiordland National Park. "It's a nice gentle dog-friendly plod along a spectacular coastline," said Paris' partner Drew Morse.

Max Johnston bounded up the track to Caroll Hut in Arthur's Pass National Park. "It is a steep, rough track, but he had a great time camping on the tops," said dad Mark.



Ida de Boer took her friends Joel Sunga, Ethan Yang and Aniketh Singh off track to climb above Upper Tama Lake in Tongariro National Park. "Those young people from Auckland had never been in the snow before!" said Ida.

Dave Jackson completed the Pelorus River Track in Richmond Forest Park. This photo was taken just below Rocks Hut.

Victoria Howells walked the Paparoa Track Great Walk with her 80-year-old dad Bob Kennedy. "We got a good dump of snow on the first night at Ces Clark Hut," said Victoria. "We did it over four days and it was an amazing trip."

David, Isobel, Ruby and Amy Lyons celebrated Amy's birthday by staying two nights at Hooker Hut, Aoraki Mt Cook National Park. "We had three days of clear views of Aoraki and two nights viewing the most stunning star-studded night sky," said David.

Emily Shi showed dad Larry how to use a selfie stick in front of the 65m high Tarawera Falls.

Phil enjoyed the view to Mt Hutt and the Canterbury Plains on the climb of Mt Somers.

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Last Weekend submission criteria can be found at wildernessmag.co.nz.

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TE ARAROA TRAIL: *10,000 WALKERS A YEAR BY 2030*

The popularity of Te Araroa Trail is booming. Before Covid there were close to 2000 hikers each year. During the 2022/23 season, more than 4000 people walked the trail and it's believed numbers could continue to grow by 10 per cent each year.

"If the trail were to grow by 10 per cent a year … we'd be looking at around 10,000 walkers in about the year 2030," said executive director of Te Araroa Trust Matt Claridge.

With interest growing (particularly internationally), some walkers have suggested numbers should be managed, perhaps with staggered start dates. According to Claridge, such issues are being discussed. Proposed changes could include redeveloping the walker registration process. Gathering more information from walkers when they register is key, Claridge believes, and would help form a potential start date regimen, "based on whether they want to be in a crowd or not in a crowd. We're looking to smooth the bubble by providing walkers with more information."

He said track carrying capacity is being assessed and is relevant to what a cap on numbers might look like. "We need to know more about the potential load the trail can sustain. Then we can look at infrastructure like accommodation, toilets – all the bits and pieces that make for a good walking experience."

There are variables attached to setting a limit on numbers, such as timing and the direction hikers walked.

Matt Claridge is exploring a number of initiatives to ensure the continued viability of Te Araroa Trail

Another change in the wings is the addition of experiential value. A concept called 'Trail Towns' is in the works, which aims to connect hikers to local businesses and communities as they emerge from the backcountry.

Not all hikers register on Te Araroa's site before starting the trail, and a benefits package is being considered to encourage them to do so. "Feedback from registered walkers tells us they would like to be identified," said Claridge. "This might be by a swing tag on their pack that could link into the Trail Towns concept, making walkers eligible for a discount with trail partners. There would be access to navigation tools and the Te Araroa community in the app, too."

LAKE WAIKAREMOANA GREAT WALK CLOSES FOR WINTER

Destruction wrought by Cyclone Gabrielle has resulted in closure of the Lake Waikaremoana Track Great Walk until the end of September. Te Uru Taumatua, local iwi Tūhoe's operations arm that manages Te Urewera, said tracks, bridges, huts, campsites and car parks had been significantly damaged by Cyclone Gabrielle and the safety of trampers could be compromised. Some sections of the Great Walk were impassable. Korokoro Campsite was flooded with 700mm of water, causing sewage contamination. At Maraunui Hut the lake level rose over 800mm, causing vegetation to rot and exposing lake edges to complete erosion. Damage to Waiopaoa Bridge will require engineering advice, and flooding at Te Karetu car park and boat ramp moved pontoons off piles.

Portacom-style buildings will provide temporary shelter in parts of Te Urewera

Elsewhere in Te Urewera, transitional shelters are set to replace some of the eight huts that were razed by fire in late 2022. The locations for these shelters are Waikare Junction and Nahiramai, while a Waimana location is being negotiated.

The portacom-design buildings can sleep six with kitchen facilities outside on covered decking.

FMC's Allan Brent says DOC needs to be honest about whether it can manage the current hut and track network

FMC responds to DOC's $300 million work backlog

Dozens of DOC huts and shelters across the country are 'high-risk structures' overdue for maintenance. The cost of the maintenance backlog on DOC's network of huts and tracks is said to be $300 million. The figures were released to Newsroom under the Official Information Act, and stated the department is 70,000 hours behind on scheduled repairs. *Wilderness* spoke with Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) vice-president Allan Brent, who said FMC is exploring solutions with DOC to tackle the backlog.

What was your initial reaction to the work backlog?

Like FMC, *Wilderness* readers might be wondering if we could see tens or hundreds of backcountry huts being demolished, bridges removed and tracks left to grow over.

But before anyone starts throwing stones, FMC wants to keep it constructive. In the past with DOC and as a community, we've sometimes chosen, wrongly, to be antagonistic, and this has not helped to foster open and honest conversation. That's why on huts and tracks, FMC is committed to working in partnership with DOC and others in our community.

What's the next step then?

We've been here before – in 2002 DOC had a similar funding situation and got through without loss of huts. There are lots of dimensions to hut and track funding. There is the way that arcane details of accounting standards are applied. Then there are issues of disposition, like whether our community can accept that DOC may not be able to afford all of its huts. If that is DOC's honest view, and is roughly fair, it wouldn't be helpful to insist that 'DOC should do its job' and maintain the current network by itself. The quality of the community's input – and the possible solutions we could offer – will be directly related to how honest DOC is prepared to be. For example, if there are 200 huts that won't fit in the budget, we need to know so we can help to work out what to do.

What kind of solutions are envisioned?

There's the possibility for different asset treatments; tweaked treatments of maintenance; a new 'hut standard' including minimal maintenance for backcountry huts in good condition; maintenance of huts by local volunteers, much in the way many club huts run currently. In a world-class system, such 'policy settings' would serve huts and tracks. Now, it seems to be the other way around. Working together, we can get back to that world-class system. FMC looks forward to working with DOC and the community to that end.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT VITAL FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE PERSONNEL

There can be five tramping fatalities every year in New Zealand. For those who attempt to save people or recover bodies, it's part of the job, but the scars can be lasting.

Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR) national health, safety and wellbeing advisor Nicky Hansen said two programmes to protect its 3500-plus volunteers' mental health already existed: a member wellbeing course included within training, and regular wellbeing checks through an outside counselling service.

"Members have their own resilience training, then we have professional help at the other end, but we didn't have anything in the middle," Hansen said. "So we're setting up a new peer support network. We have a bunch of people keen to be support leaders – they've been out on searches and understand what the members are going through.

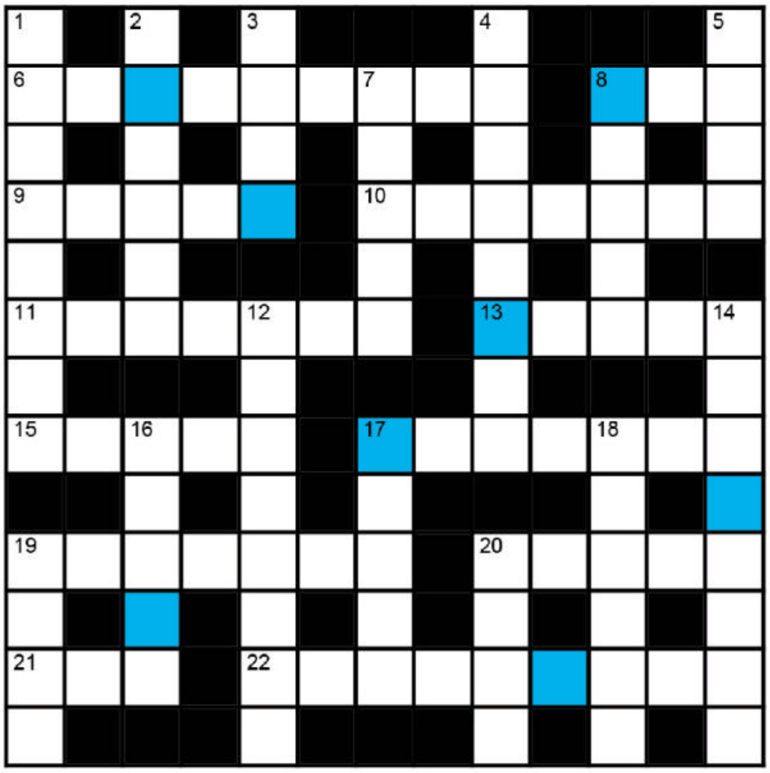
"There's a huge range of experience from the people who have put their hand up. It's about people knowing that there is somebody there who is going to listen to them and who understands."

LandSAR is establishing a peer support network to help its volunteers

Complete the crossword and rearrange the letters in the blue squares to spell out the hidden solution. Send your answer, name and address, by June 18, to: wildernessword@lifestylepublishing.co.nz.

All correct entries go in the draw to win one of five Light My Fire Sporks.

WILD WORD



Across

6. Plants that grow on other plants (9)

8. Piece of material strung up with rope as simple stand-alone shelter (3)

9. Remote-controlled device that can be used for aerial photos of wilderness (5)

10. Roundabout routes taken to avoid slips or floods (7)

11. _____ Pass – in NZ's Southern Alps (7)

13. Trampers aim to reach hut before this time (5)

15. Daniel _____ wrote 'Robinson Crusoe' – great wilderness story! (5)

17. _____ scale – used to measure magnitude of earthquakes (7)

19. Books to consult when planning next wilderness trip? (7)

20. Outdoor challenge could be used to _____ money for charity (5)

21. Crampons are needed on this sort of surface (3)

22. Prominent natural features you can use to orient yourself (9)

Down

1. Narrow promontory that projects from coastline into sea (8)

2. What threatened species may eventually do (3,3)

3. Snow ____ – this helps you walk on deep snow (4)

4. Sort of drink that replenishes electrolytes in body lost during vigorous activity (8)

5. Calm regions at centre of storms (4)

7. Be aware of timing of these during coastline walk (5)

8. Far-_____ – this could describe remote area (5)

12. Sporks are handy ones! (8)

14. _____ Range – Canterbury mountain range near Craigieburn (8)

16. _____ ferns – seen in NZ bush, with delicate translucent fronds (5)

17. Kauri gum is hardened _____ from kauri trees (5)

18. _____ River – NZ's fourth longest river, located in Otago (6)

19. Lactic ____ – substance produced in muscle tissue during strenuous exertion (4)

20. Tall NZ coniferous tree (4)

Hidden solution: Small feathered friend you might see in bush (8) **May's hidden solution:** Crown Range

FUTURE OF AUCLAND'S WEST COAST TRACKS UNCERTAIN

It could be months before walks like Piha's Tasman Lookout Track and Laird Thomson Track reopen in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park. Some may not open at all.

A number of tracks in the Waitākere Ranges were badly damaged and in some cases destroyed when Cyclone Gabrielle hit Auckland. The bridge at the Bethells end of Te Henga Walkway was washed away, and multiple tracks remain littered with large slips.

While other regional parks in Auckland reopened after clean-up missions, Muriwai Regional Park, Te Rau Pūriri Regional Park and Waitākere Ranges Regional Park remain closed.

Auckland Council western principal ranger Reg Phillips said park rangers and staff continue to assess damage and accessibility. "A number of tracks suffered major slips and flooding that are unlikely to be resolved in the near future. However, we are still receiving geotechnical advice to work through what our options are. No final decisions regarding long-term track closure have been made at this point."

Damaged tracks that Phillips estimates won't open for some time include Laird Thomson Track, Tasman Lookout Track, Marawhara Track, White Track, Lion Rock Track and Lake Wainamu Track (full loop).

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Staying motivated till the end

At what is the halfway point for most Walk1200km participants, *Wilderness* spoke to two people undertaking great feats of endurance, to find out what motivates them and what lessons we can apply to our own challenges.

by **AMELIA NURSE**

Mike Cosgrove walked 1200km across the Nulabor Plain in Australia

MOTIVATION CAN BE INSIDE, alongside or ahead, but it's often solitary and heavy.

Mike Cosgrove will probably be having a hot shower as you read this, but when I caught up with him, he was roughly 900km across the 1200km Nullarbor Plain in Australia. Nullarbor means 'no trees' (*nullus arbor* in Latin). The Australian indigenous word for the plain is Oondiri – The Waterless. So why there?

Mike's raising money for Gumboot Friday, an initiative that supports young people with mental health struggles. "I wanted it to be hard because I know that people going through issues of mental health have it much harder than what I'm doing here," he says.

"On my shoes I'm carrying the names of eight family members and friends. They've all taken their own lives. That causes a lot of heartache. We're trying to prevent it from getting to that stage."

That's Mike's external motivation. Alongside this sits the planning. Mike has climbed mountains on every continent, he climbed the four highest peaks in the North Island in one day, and he has run 100km ultra-marathons.

"There are so many things you've got to put in place to reach the top of a mountain. It's like the rungs of a ladder.

"I'll put in mini challenges, like the #microchallenges done with Walk1200km – that's awesome."

Mike's approach combines optimism and pragmatism: "Eighty per cent is in your head," he says, "the rest is weather and money and fitness."

And he keeps things in perspective: "This is not forever. The pain, the hardness – in an hour's time you'll be standing under a hot shower. Everything will come right."

For Mike, 'right' is relative. Some nine years ago he was t-boned on his motorbike and nearly lost his leg. "They were going to take it off. That on its own was a real motivation to get going again. I was two years on crutches, 13 surgeries, and it motivated me. I wanted to prove that my leg was still good; I wanted to get out, do some stuff. I can never run again, but I can walk."

He has twice walked a marathon in under six hours. "I've had to be realistic. I'm not the sort to give up. Maybe I try just a bit at a time. A bit of success gets the endorphins running."

There are always challenges ahead, and rewards. Both are motivating, as are people. Nedd Brockmann inspired Mike: he was 23 when he ran across Australia. And Marshall Ulrich, who ran across America when he was 57. "Many people have done far more than me, so surely I can do this." And the rewards? "A hot shower."

Jono Ridler seeks out people who have already accomplished a challenge, then "annoys them with questions about their experience". But when planning to swim from Aotea Great Barrier Island to Auckland, there was no one to ask; no one had done this before. On May 3, Jono completed the longest, unassisted, continuous open-water swim in New Zealand's history: almost 100km, 33+ hours from Karaka Bay to Campbells Bay. He encountered two-metre swells and 30-knot winds. But "there wasn't any kind of recognisable marine life."

Jono joined forces with Live Ocean Foundation to create Swim4TheGulf, with the objective of raising awareness of the health of the Hauraki Gulf. It was a natural step. Jono spent his summers on Great Barrier Island when he was growing up, and has witnessed the degradation of the Gulf. He wanted to put action behind his convictions around marine conservation.

> **“You have to be flexible with life while keeping an eye on the prize, whatever that is for you.”**
>
> *– Jono Ridler*

Jono Ridler became the first person to swim the almost 100km distance from Aotea to Auckland

The massive swim was also a continuation of previous accomplishments: between 2019 and 2022 he swam the Triple Crown of Cook Strait, Foveaux Strait and Lake Taupō. “I was kind of audacious enough to think I could do this swim.”

When Jono started out swimming in the ocean – 2km, 5km, 10km – he was interested in his own physical, mental and emotional capabilities “and how far I could push myself … understanding my boundaries. And I’ve realised those boundaries are flexible, and that motivates me to keep on pushing, further and further. Every time I do these things I get immense satisfaction. So there’s a strong intrinsic drive versus the extrinsic – the achievements side of things – which isn’t as alluring. The ocean conservation is next-level intrinsic for me. It’s something I’ll fight for for a long time. And the combination of those two things is incredibly powerful as well. It feels right in a lot of ways, really natural.”

Jono is self-coached, and goals are important in his training, as is discipline. Jiu jitsu and judo have cemented mental discipline and resilience: “You’re in some pretty uncomfortable situations. You know people will be trying to chuck you out or contort your body in a way that is not natural and you’ve got to sit with that pain.”

Training plans and targeted exercises, like swimming while fatigued and swimming at night, were all part of the preparation ahead of his Gulf swim. A shoulder injury was not. “I had to throw out some of the training. I had some anxiety around that, but you have to be flexible with life while keeping an eye on the prize, whatever that is for you.”

And what’s Jono’s next endeavour? “I’m doing the Ice Mile Challenge in July at St Bathans – a 2.5km swim in less than five-degree water, so that will be fun.”

What motivates you?

Short days mean less time to get out and do your thing – and sometimes motivation flags. We asked Walk1200km participants what gets them going: is it goals they want to reach for themselves, for others, or both?

MOTIVATION SOMETIMES COMES FROM THE DOGGOS!

"They find bad weather irrelevant."

– Kari Fairweather

DOING IT WITH FRIENDS

"I love challenges that my friends and I can do together to encourage each other. I am enjoying having this personal goal of Walk1200km. It feels like I'm doing something for myself for once."

– Karen Harper

MOTIVATION COMES FROM PERSONAL GOALS, INSPIRATION COMES FROM OTHERS IN THIS GROUP

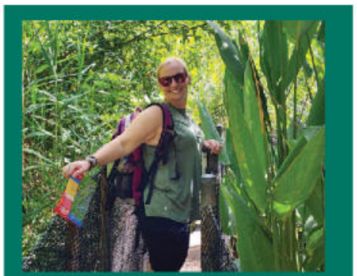
"We lost a dear friend to suicide last year and I was in a bad place mentally and physically. I saw the Walk1200km challenge and decided that's what I needed. It's been brilliant. Raising money for the Mental Health Foundation is an added bonus, and I don't want to let down those people who supported me by donating. I feel so much stronger now and the hours walking and thinking have helped me deal with grief."

– Rebecca Jago

In the beginning it was a personal goal, but I drew inspiration from stories others posted

"I am turning 80 at the end of the year and have been told to keep moving because of arthritis. My partner died in November 2022 and I struggled. I read (March) *Wilderness* and signed up for the challenge. It gave me a reason to get up each morning and a goal to achieve. Then it became important to add my encouragement to help motivate others to succeed. Three months into my personal challenge, I am fitter, happier and looking forward rather than back."

– Jenny Christensen



Day to day works best for me

"MOSTLY PERSONAL GOALS, BUT ... IT IS THE ON TOP WHEN I DO A BETTER TIME THAN MY HUBBY AT AN EVENT."

– Bronwyn Eeles

PERSONAL GOALS WORK THE BEST FOR ME

"Particularly with maintaining an unbroken streak of achievement. Makes me head out even in the dark and the rain if I need to get a bit more done."

– Jenny Weston

I LIKE TO CHALLENGE MYSELF ...

"It's also cool when friends think you're amazing doing what you're doing."

- Jeanette Rybinski

For myself ... but also for my baby boys

"I want to be fit and strong and continue to get into the outdoors and be active with them as they get older. And to be a role model to them."

– Leanne Watson

It's part of my long-term plan

"I enjoy getting out but also it's helping me get fitter for my longer-term goal of completing all the Great Walks before I turn 50. And with that I now have a group of friends who are coming along on the journey with me!"

– Trine Kilduff

JULY 2023 #microchallenges

Each month we set three new #microchallenges to add interest and silliness to your kilometres.

These three fun #microchallenges will help you better appreciate your surroundings and have fun on your walks. Our favourite nine #microchallenge completers receive a Walk1200km badge. The best entry for each challenge receives a prize from our partners.

#microchallenge28

Be a lunchtime champ

Walk 6km in one hour, trying to get as close to spot-on as possible (i.e. 6km in 60 minutes would be perfect). You'll need to get someone to take a photo of you showing your distance and time on your phone or tracking device to enter this one!

#microchallenge28

PARTNER PRIZE:

A $100 Back Country Cuisine voucher

GIFT VOUCHER
$100
BACK COUNTRY CUISINE

#microchallenge29:

Walk to a pier

Can you visit a wharf, pier or jetty on one of your walks? It could be lakeside, in a harbour or at the seashore. Take a photo of you on the wharf/jetty/pier and tell us about your walk (we don't just want a photo of the wharf).

#microchallenge29

PARTNER PRIZE:

A pair of Bridgedale Midweight Merino Performance Fit socks.

#microchallenge30:

IT'S A SIGN

We're looking for a photo of you with a sign, notice or billboard. It can be big, unusual, fun, surprising or even boring!

#microchallenge30

PARTNER PRIZE:

Rab Nexus Pull-on worth $139.95

HOW TO ENTER

Take a photo of yourself (yes, people make the photo more interesting!) completing the challenge and share it on the Walk1200km Facebook group with a descriptive caption and using the relevant hashtag – e.g. #microchallenge29 – by July 20 (or email entries to walk1200km@lifestylepublishing.co.nz with the relevant hashtag in the subject line and a brief description in the email). Winners will be published in the September 2023 issue of *Wilderness*.

Got an idea for a challenge? Email walk1200km@lifestylepublishing.co.nz

#microchallenge 22-24 winners!

Want to win gear and vouchers from Walk1200km partners? Complete the #microchallenges as these Walk1200km participants have done and receive a Walk1200km badge. The best efforts receive a special prize from our partners!

GIFT VOUCHER
$100
BACK COUNTRY CUISINE

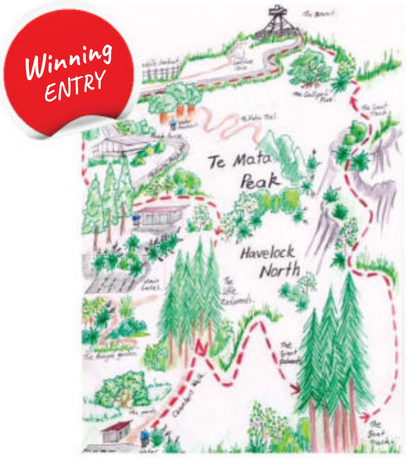
#microchallenge22:

DRAW A MAP OF YOUR WALK

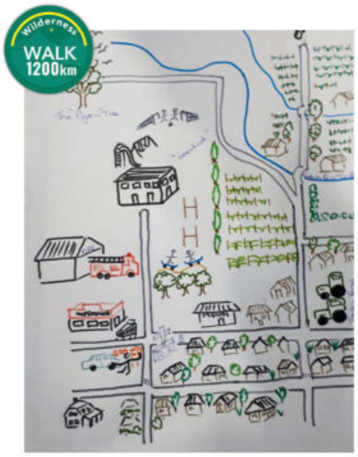
We tasked participants to illustrate a map of the walk they do most often.

Look at these amazing entries!

PARTNER PRIZE: Back Country Cuisine voucher



Justine Pedersen's amazingly detailed map takes us on a tour of Havelock North and includes such landmarks as Te Mata Peak, Gallipoli Pine and the Little and Giant Redwoods.



Jan Clayton-Greene doodled a map of Renwick that includes a skate park, fire station, supermarket and petrol station.

SEEN THAT YOU'VE WON?
To claim your prize, email your address and a photo of yourself holding this issue of Wilderness to: walk1200km@lifestylepublishing.co.nz.

#microchallenge23:

SHARE A LANDMARK FROM YOUR WALK

PARTNER PRIZE: Bridgedale Midweight Merino Performance Fit socks winner!

Winning ENTRY

Susan Duncan used a wet Nelson day to visit the centre of New Zealand monument. "Who would have known a wet day in Nelson could be so much fun," she said.

Christine Reader visited the Te Matou a Pohe bridge in Whangarei. "Every day I feel incredibly lucky to live where I do, in a small suburb on our local mountain (Parihaka) close to the centre of Whangarei,' she said.

Lynne Kroening climbed 12km on the Waimate Walkway to visit the Clydesdale Monument which 'commemorates the many draught horses which did so much for the development and prosperity of New Zealand'.

#microchallenge24:

PHOTOGRAPH THE SUNRISE

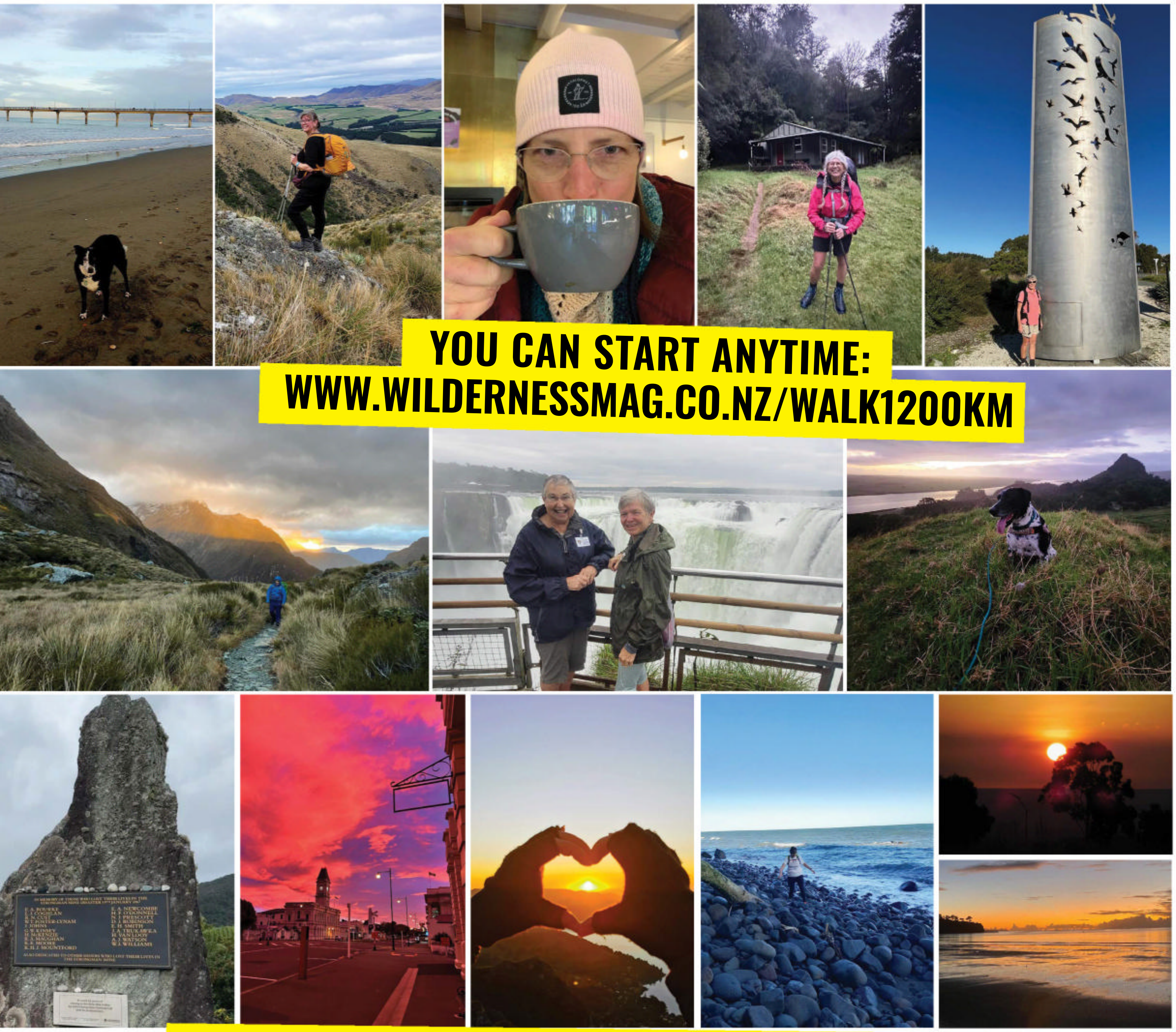
PARTNER PRIZE:
A 1600-lumen Fenix HM70R rechargeable headlamp

Winning ENTRY

Emilia Liebert and her dad Robert camped at Mt Fyffe Hut and got to watch the sun rise over the Kaikōura Peninsula. "Emelia creates the perfect silhouette as the sun comes up," said Robert.

Tim Sutton and friends were up early to traverse the ridge between Jumbo Peak and Angle Knob in Tararua Forest Park.

Lisa Ainley climbed Mt Thomas before dawn with a friend just to watch the sunrise. "What better way to start the last work day of the week," she said.



YOU CAN START ANYTIME: WWW.WILDERNESSMAG.CO.NZ/WALK1200KM

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> *“What we have in New Zealand is really special and it’s disappearing before our eyes, in our lifetime.”*

A master sheds light on glacial retreat

Virginia Woolf has turned her love of the outdoors into a career in photography. Her latest project documents the loss of New Zealand's glaciers due to climate change.

by NAOMI ARNOLD

There was a moment at Fox Glacier recently when climate change grief really hit Nelson photographer Virginia Woolf. Ten years earlier she had seen the glacier up close from a track on the northern side of Fox River. Since then the glacier has receded 1000m and that track is closed. The only way to get close on foot is via the south side of the river.

"I almost cried," she says. "I was in total shock at how far the glacier had receded. It was unreal that, in 10 years, so much had disappeared."

Looking at the bare rock and water where once was ice, she felt galvanised to raise awareness of climate change. After reading the report of the 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, she wondered how she could help to publicise the results. She decided to make glaciers the subject of a photographic project she has called Final Meltdown.

The outdoors is a major focus of Woolf's photography; she is a keen tramper, mountain biker, trail runner and paddleboarder. She grew up in Gisborne, but fell in love with glaciers in Canada, where she lived for a year in 1999. She was recently named a Canon Master, one of 15 in Australasia and just four in New Zealand.

"I come alive when I'm outdoors," she says. "It's a privilege to be able to go places and photograph scenes that some people may never see."

Final Meltdown focuses on what is left of New Zealand glaciers and on the scientists monitoring their decline, such as University of Canterbury lecturer Dr Heather Purdie. Woolf spent several days on Tasman Glacier, at Tasman Lake and at Fox.

"I wanted to capture the scientists in their element doing the work and at the same time … to capture the beauty of what we still have," she says. "What we have in New Zealand is really special and it's disappearing before our eyes, in our lifetime."

On the ice she felt overawed by the sounds, the colours – from soft pastel blues through to deep aqua and turquoise – the ice caves and formations. But she also watched with dismay as the valley walls eroded in real time.

"It's beautiful, but devastating being up there too, because you can see the disruption and you can see how dirty the ice is. You can hear the rumble of avalanches, and it's not ice but rock from the release of pressure as the glacier has melted," she says. "It's happening right in front of you. It's shattering."

Ultimately, Woolf wants to help people get close to the remnants of glaciers that still exist.

"We don't see these landscape-scale changes with anything else," she says. "It was only 10 years ago that my son was born. What's it going to be like when he's my age if we keep going the way we are?"

Virginia Woolf's climate change project captures scientists in their element

SEE MORE... ARCHES

These six walks lead to impressive natural arches.

by SHAUN BARNETT

What nature produces, humans often try to replicate. The Romans mimicked natural arches when designing their bridges, as these Latin engineers recognised the inherent strength of the form. There is not only strength in an arch but a pleasing aesthetic, too.

While New Zealand may not have the abundance of natural arches found in places like Utah's Arches National Park, we do have a handful of impressive ones. Some have been shaped from limestone by the corrosive action of water, others have been beaten into shape by the relentless attention of that master carver, the ocean.

Here are six walks that all feature an arch, ranging from the elegant to the monumental.

1

TONGAPŌRUTU, TARANAKI

The northern Taranaki coastline is a place of impressive seascapes: where blunt cliffs meet the pounding breakers of the Tasman Sea; where rock stacks rise from the low-tide sands, and where arches have been created by the action of innumerable tides. Access is from the tiny hamlet of Tongapōrutu, just off SH3. A 30-minute walk along the true left of Tongapōrutu River leads to the sea.

Don't attempt this walk in anything other than the two to three hours preceding low tide, as the sea comes in dangerously rapidly after the tide turns.

2

ŌPĀRARA VALLEY, KAHURANGI NATIONAL PARK

Some of the most impressive limestone arches in the country are in the Ōpārara Valley.

Two can be visited on short walks beginning from the end of McCallums Mill Road, which is about an hour's drive along a winding, narrow road from Karamea. The smaller, but more shapely, is known as Moria Gate, a natural limestone bridge spanning the Ōpārara River. It's reached on a well-graded circuit, which also passes Mirror Tarn. Allow two hours for the circuit. The larger arch, known as the Ōpārara Arch, is also a collapsed cave system, and is accessible on a separate track. Allow 30 minutes each way.

3

MANGAPOHUE NATURAL BRIDGE SCENIC RESERVE, KING COUNTRY

Limestone dominates much of the King Country, famously at the Waitomo Caves. But there are other subtler features too, including the arch at this small scenic reserve, which is accessible on Te Anga Road, about an hour's drive from Te Kuiti.

A 20-minute track leads through lush native forest to the natural arch.

4

DOUGHBOY BAY, RAKIURA NATIONAL PARK

Rakiura's four-to-five-day Southern Circuit is a shorter tramp than its more northern counterpart, but is no less spectacular. Perhaps the most interesting coastal location is Doughboy Bay, where an eight-bunk hut offers good accommodation. Around the far side of the bay (watch out for quicksand!) is a small islet, and sea arch, which can be walked through.

5

TAUPŌ POINT, ABEL TASMAN NATIONAL PARK

While granite dominates most of Abel Tasman National Park, at Taupō Point, a limestone outcrop occurs at this unusual headland. There was a Māori pā on the headland here, which offered excellent natural defences as well as a superb vantage point. Access is from Wainui Bay, where a track diverts off the Abel Tasman Coast Track and follows the picturesque shoreline, passing a sea arch en route, until reaching Taupō Point. Access is dependent on low tide, so plan your trip accordingly. Allow 90 minutes each way.

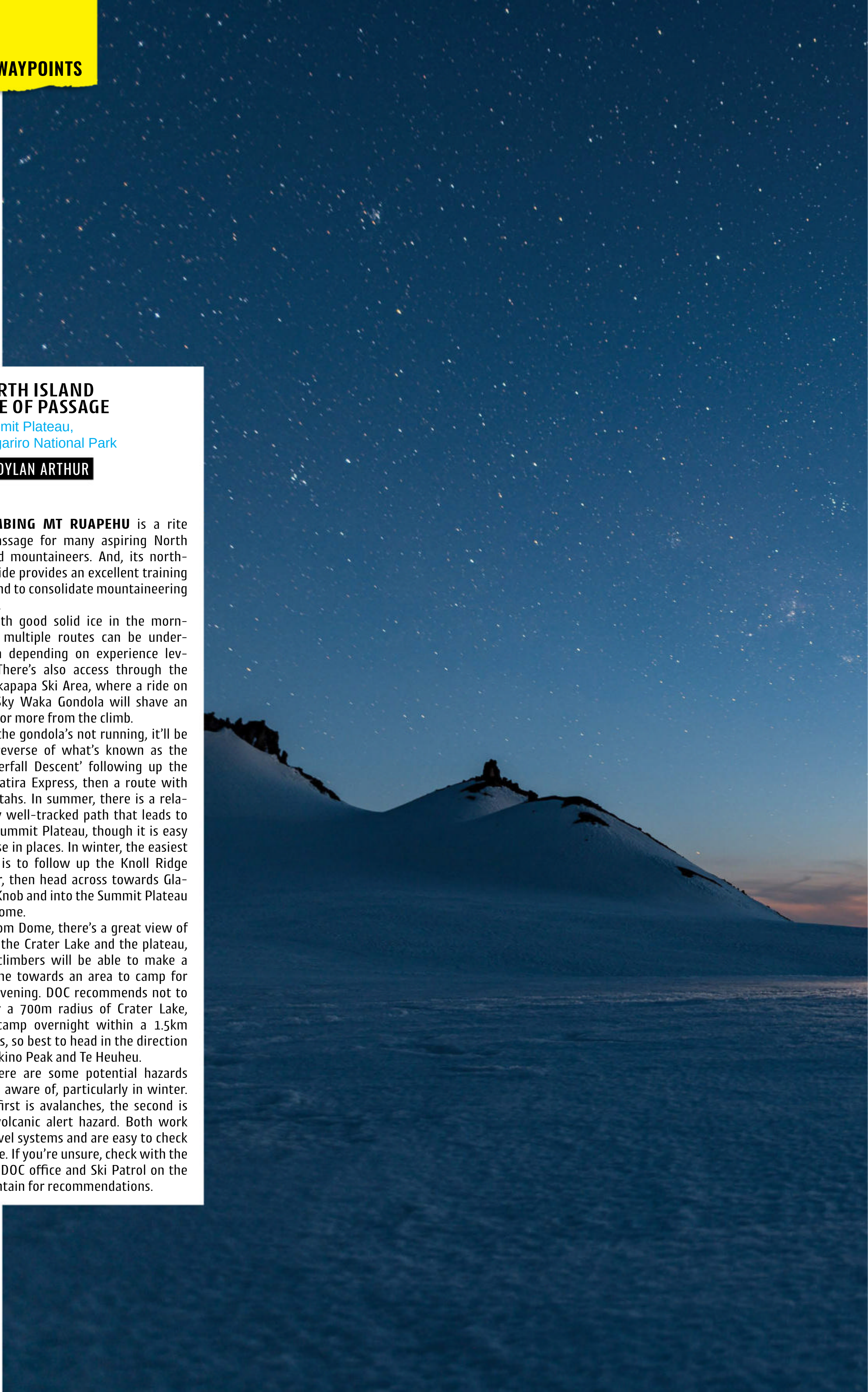
6

ARCHWAY ISLANDS, GOLDEN BAY

Wharariki Beach is a 25-minute walk over farmland and through sand dunes. It's a coastal location of outstanding beauty and is always worth the effort to get there, no matter the weather. Lying just offshore are several islands, only just separated from the mainland at the lowest tides. The largest features an impressive arch that is only apparent as you walk west along the beach and look back at it from an oblique angle. It's quite a sight. Allow a minimum of two hours to fully enjoy the place.

Sea arches, Tongapōrutu, Taranaki

SHAUN BARNETT/BLACK ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY



NORTH ISLAND RITE OF PASSAGE

Summit Plateau,
Tongariro National Park

by DYLAN ARTHUR

CLIMBING MT RUAPEHU is a rite of passage for many aspiring North Island mountaineers. And, its northern side provides an excellent training ground to consolidate mountaineering skills.

With good solid ice in the mornings, multiple routes can be undertaken depending on experience levels. There's also access through the Whakapapa Ski Area, where a ride on the Sky Waka Gondola will shave an hour or more from the climb.

If the gondola's not running, it'll be the reverse of what's known as the 'Waterfall Descent' following up the Rangatira Express, then a route with waratahs. In summer, there is a relatively well-tracked path that leads to the Summit Plateau, though it is easy to lose in places. In winter, the easiest path is to follow up the Knoll Ridge T-Bar, then head across towards Glacier Knob and into the Summit Plateau via Dome.

From Dome, there's a great view of both the Crater Lake and the plateau, and climbers will be able to make a beeline towards an area to camp for the evening. DOC recommends not to enter a 700m radius of Crater Lake, nor camp overnight within a 1.5km radius, so best to head in the direction of Tukino Peak and Te Heuheu.

There are some potential hazards to be aware of, particularly in winter. The first is avalanches, the second is the volcanic alert hazard. Both work on level systems and are easy to check online. If you're unsure, check with the local DOC office and Ski Patrol on the mountain for recommendations.

WILDFILE

Access Bruce Road – Whakapapa Ski Area

Grade Moderate

Distance 7km

Time 2-4hr to Summit Plateau (if using the Gondola)

Total ascent 718m

Topo50 map BJ34

DOWNLOAD Find the map and route notes for this trip at **www.wildernessmag.co.nz**

WILD TRIPS

The ridge above Ōhau Ski Field, with the exit route down the Maitland Valley far below

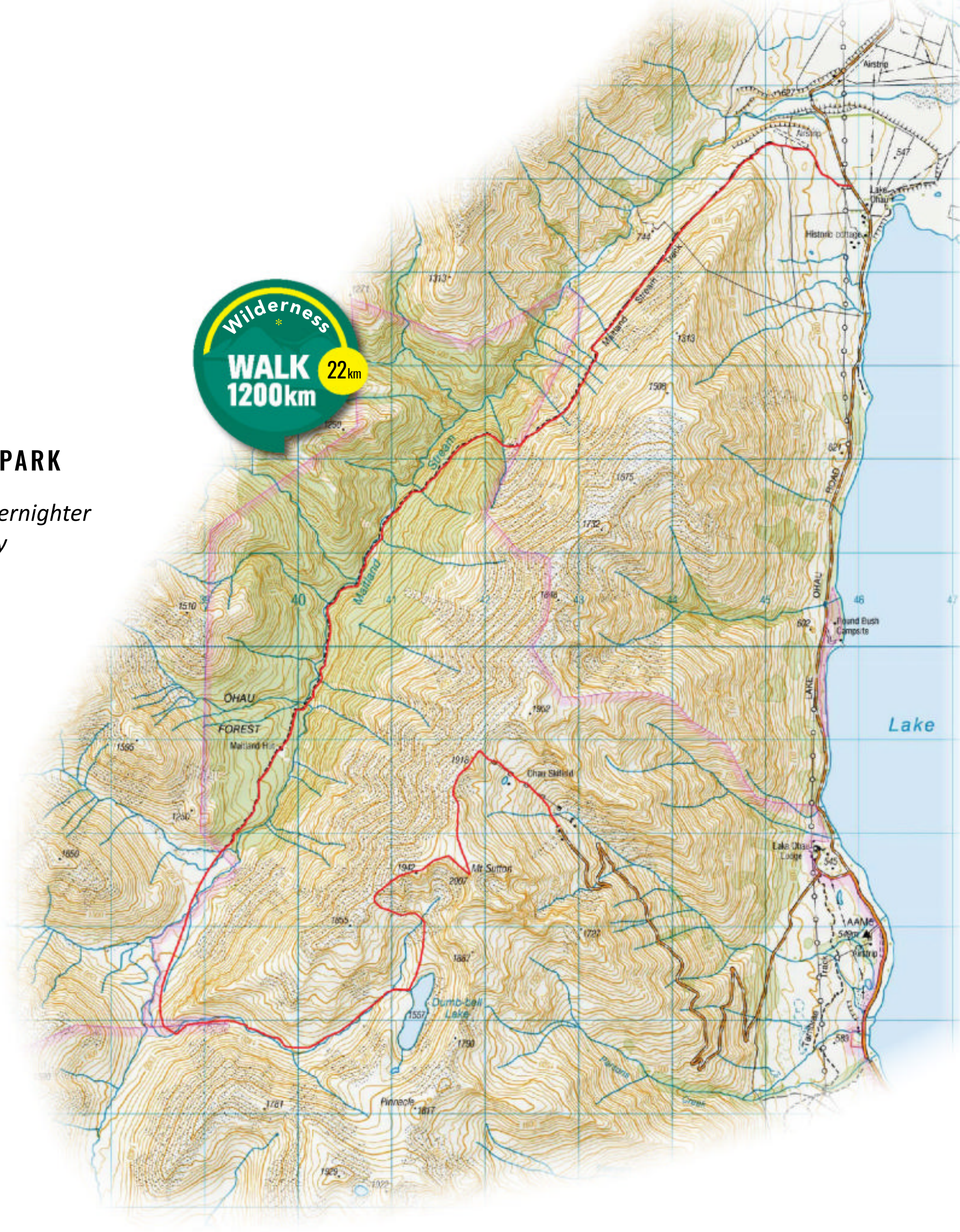
SAM HARRISON

MAITLAND HUT VIA DUMB-BELL LAKE

RUATANIWHA CONSERVATION PARK

A fantastic winter day trip or an overnighter for those wishing to stay in the cosy four-bunk Maitland Hut.

by **SAM HARRISON**



THE ROUTE CLIMBS steeply beneath the chairlift of the Ohau Ski Field towards the ridge of the Ōhau Range. There are expansive views from the ridge over the turquoise waters of Lake Ōhau and the snowy peaks of the Ben Ōhau Range beyond.

Follow the ridge over Pt1918 and up easy slopes to Mt Sutton (2007m). From Mt Sutton, the end of Dumb-bell Lake can be seen tucked in behind steep snow-clad slopes.

Follow the ridge to the west, circling around to Pt1942 on a gradual descent. From Pt1942, descend 100m on snow or scree slopes (depending on the time of year) to the saddle between Pt1855 and Pt1942. The route now turns east towards the northern end of the lake, passing beneath Pt1942 to cross the lake's feeder stream followed by a 140m descent to the lake edge.

In winter the lake may be frozen except for at its outlet. In summer it's an idyllic camping spot.

The outlet stream is followed southerly, gradually descending for around 1.2km, before turning west to the Maitland Valley. There's occasional rock-hopping, but the route is easy enough to follow through speargrass-infested tussock. At one point, the stream drops spectacularly off a ledge and in winter can form a waterfall of solid ice.

It's northwards around the spur leading to Pt1855 following the stream into the Maitland Valley. The valley opens out and walkers pass through tall tussock fields before entering forest from where it's about 1km to the four-bunk Maitland Hut.

From the hut, the track follows Maitland Stream. Take care along less well-formed sections of track to avoid slipping into the stream.

About 3km from the hut, on the 800m contour, it's uphill for 300m in a steep sidle away from Maitland Stream before traversing some large scree slopes. Just below Pt1508, it's downwards again and within a few hundred metres there's a 4WD farm road that is easy to walk. The final kilometre is a stroll across farm paddocks to the car park on Lake Ōhau Road.

Dumb-bell Lake makes a fantastic winter trip with various options available to mix it up, including continuing to Snowy Gorge Hut or joining up with Te Araroa at Freehold Creek.

WILDFILE

Access Via Ōhau Ski Field and Lake Ōhau Road

Grade Difficult

Time Maitland Hut to Lake Ōhau Road 3–4hr

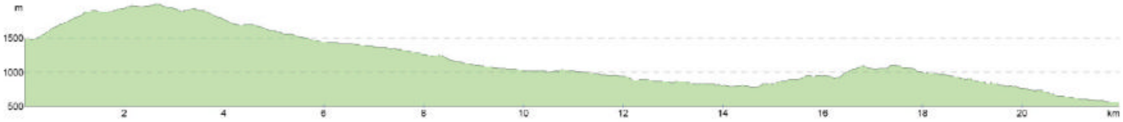
Distance 22km

Total ascent 1266m

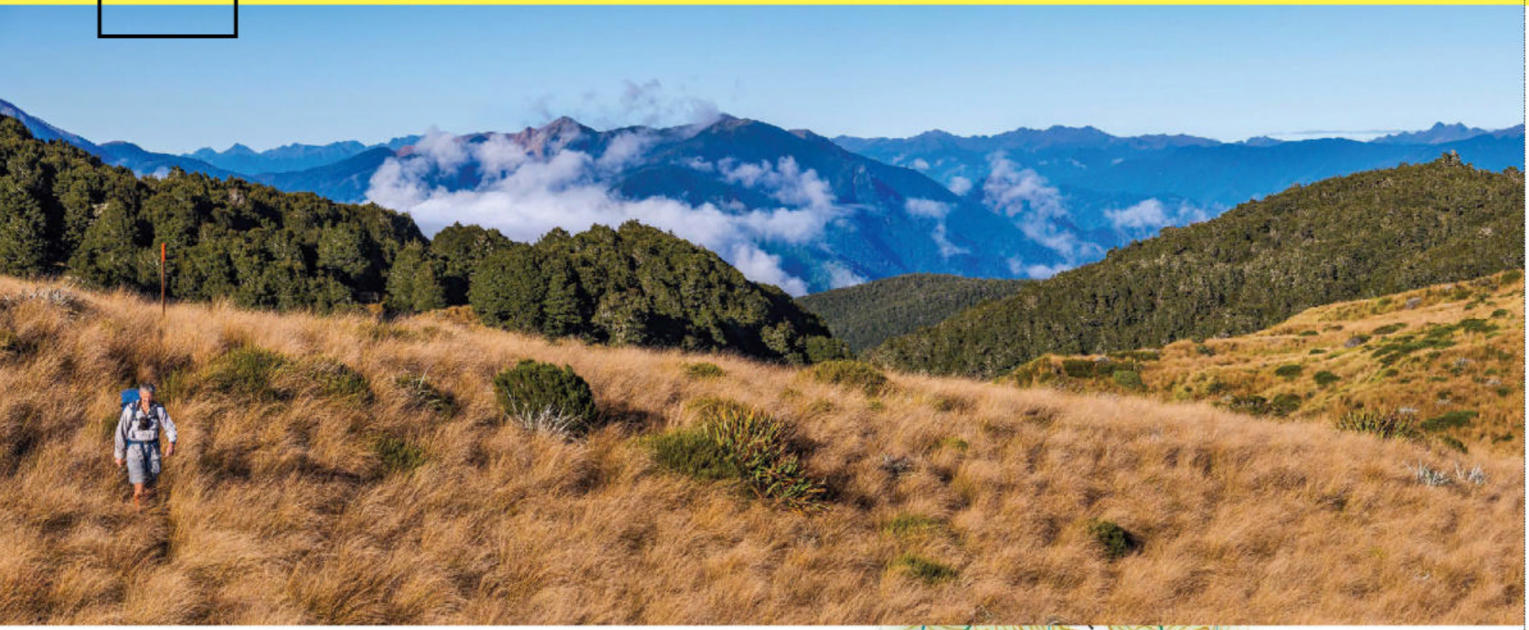
Accommodation Maitland Hut (standard, four bunks)

Topo50 map BZ14

Further information Access out of the Maitland Valley must be sought from Lake Ohau Station (03 438 9663)



DOWNLOAD Find the map and route notes for this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz



In the headwaters of Mole Creek, near Mole Saddle, with the Matakitaki Valley beyond

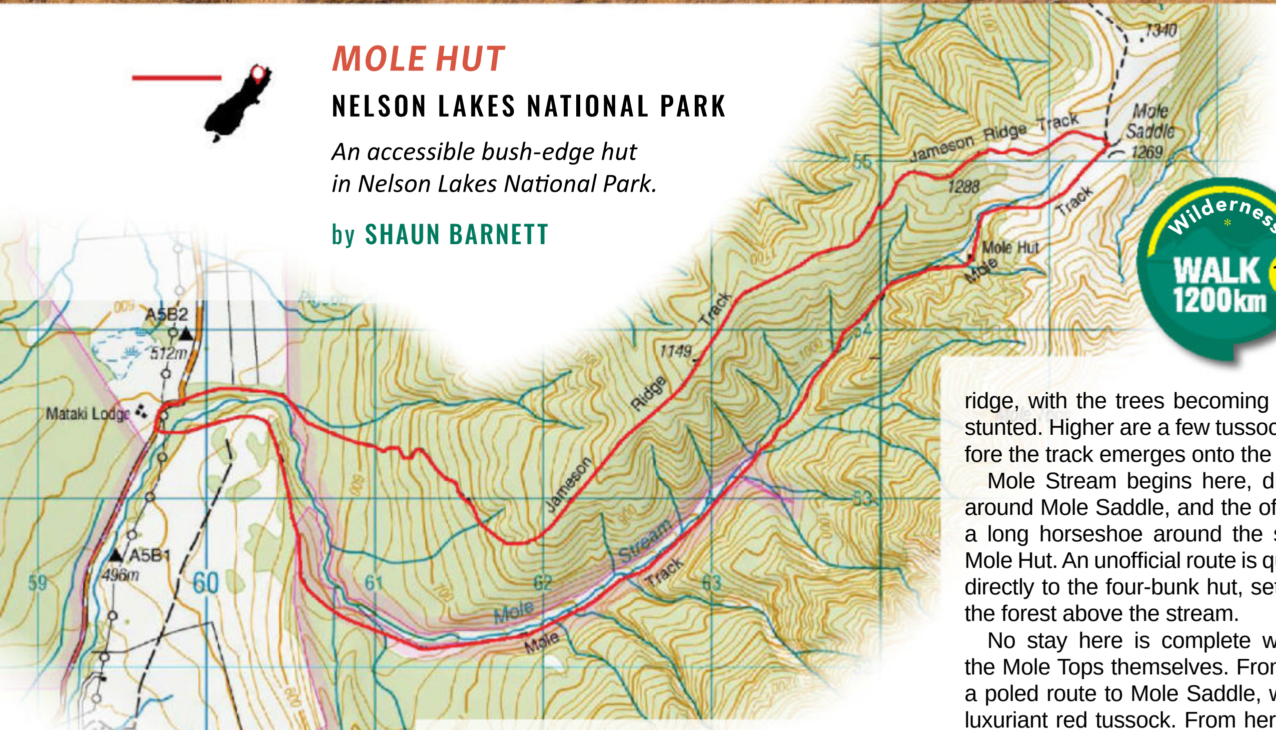
SHAUN BARNETT/BLACK ROBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

MOLE HUT

NELSON LAKES NATIONAL PARK

An accessible bush-edge hut
in Nelson Lakes National Park.

by **SHAUN BARNETT**



Wilderness WALK 15.4km 1200km

MOLE TOPS is a delightful tarn-studded tussock expanse at the northern end of the Ella Range. The tops are accessible on two good tracks that can be combined to make a satisfying circuit.

There's a signposted car park beside Mole Stream, near Mataki Lodge. Access to the Jameson Ridge Track is back up the road a bit and across a stile on the edge of farmland. The track heads east, briefly diverting down to river level beside Mole Stream before climbing again through beech forest. While never strenuous, the gradient eases even more at about 1000m then becomes a pleasant amble along the forested ridge, with the trees becoming more and more stunted. Higher are a few tussocky clearings before the track emerges onto the tops proper.

Mole Stream begins here, draining the tops around Mole Saddle, and the official route does a long horseshoe around the saddle to reach Mole Hut. An unofficial route is quicker and leads directly to the four-bunk hut, set on the edge of the forest above the stream.

No stay here is complete without exploring the Mole Tops themselves. From the hut, follow a poled route to Mole Saddle, weaving through luxuriant red tussock. From here, an unmarked foot trail leads up the obvious spur, climbing steeply to the knoll named Mole Tops (1651m). At the ridge the superb views expand, with glittering tarns and carpet-like vegetation. These are Olympic swimming pool-sized tarns, and glorious camping sites. The rocky knoll at Pt1770m is worth scrambling up for even broader views over the mountains of Nelson Lakes, the more distant Victoria Range and Mt Owen.

The area was farmed in the past, and some of the tops' open country has been burnt before.

From Mole Hut, the track follows the course of Mole Stream back to the car park. Keep an eye out for kārearea. They've been seen nesting in the area.

WILDFILE

Access Tutaki Road South, 35km from Murchison

Grade Moderate

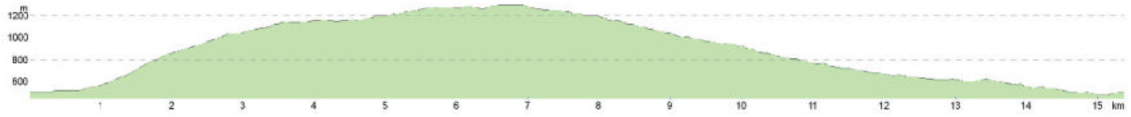
Time 3hr via Jameson Ridge Track; 3hr via Mole Stream

Distance 15.4km

Total ascent 700m

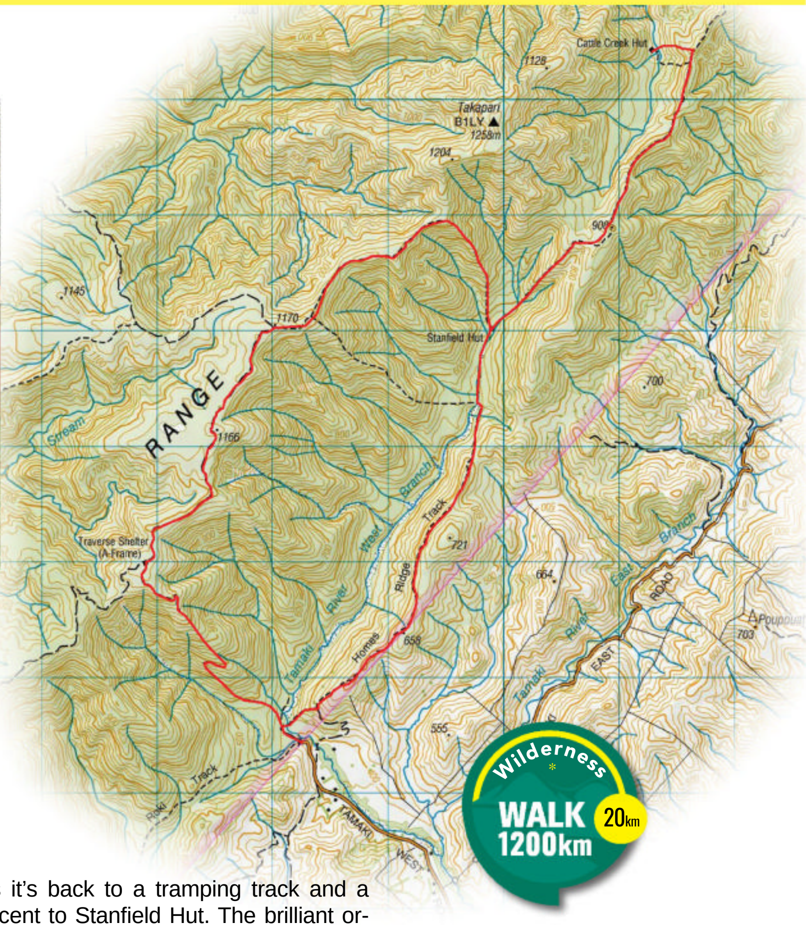
Accommodation Mole Hut (standard, four bunks)

Topo50 Map BS23, BS24



DOWNLOAD Find the map and route notes for this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

Stanfield Hut in the southern Ruahine Ranges



CATTLE CREEK HUT VIA TE AO TŪPARE

RUAHINE FOREST PARK

This overnight trip is a complete delight and incorporates charming historic huts, fantastic views and fun ridge and river travel.

by **SARAH WHITE**

A COUPLE of minutes beyond the car park is an extensive grassy picnic area with a shelter, fireplaces, picnic tables and flushing toilets. It's a place to camp before an early morning start to the trip.

From the picnic area it's all uphill through podocarp then leatherwood forest to Te Ao Tūpare/Traverse (A-Frame) Hut. The track is well marked and after about two hours of climbing, Takapari Road, a well-maintained 4WD track, is reached. Turn right and the hut is 100m away. It's at 1092m, nestled among leatherwood and, on a fine day, there are stunning views both west and east.

The hut has been restored by members of a local hapū supported by the Backcountry Trust. It had previously been vandalised by people who drove up the 4WD. The barge boards have been painted colourfully with a contemporary Māori design that tells the story of the Ruahine and celebrates the landscape and vegetation. The A-frame is vintage 1970s Forest Service, and with the painted barge boards there are clear references to Māori wharenui.

Continue north along Takapiri Road following the crest of the range. After a couple of kilometres it's back to a tramping track and a steep descent to Stanfield Hut. The brilliant orange of the hut is visible a good half hour before reaching it. This section of track is notoriously slippery; expect to arrive with a muddy backside. Stanfield is light and welcoming having also been recently renovated. It's popular with families and hunters.

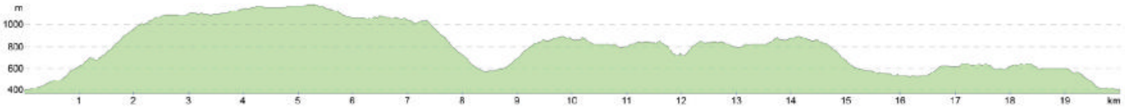
Follow the Tamaki River West Branch upstream for about 400m where, on the true left, an orange post and markers indicate the bush entrance. It's another steep climb through bush over Pt908 and then a gentler pace along the open ridge. Cattle Creek Hut can be seen from here.

After around 2.2km, take the left junction and the track drops steeply towards the hut, which is off the track a little way.

To return, retrace steps to Stanfield Hut where options are the Homes Ridge Track or walking straight down Tamaki River.

The Homes Ridge Track is initially in the riverbed before leaving it about 700m downstream from Stanfield Hut. It is a nice undulating walk along the tops.

The river route is not marked but is straightforward when the river is in low flow: just stay in the bed. It entails crisscrossing the river more than 60 times, so should not be attempted during or after rain. In dry conditions and about two hours from Stanfield Hut, there's a big orange triangle on the river's true right. This marks the track to the picnic site where the trip began.



WILDFILE

Access Tamaki West Road, off SH2 via Laws and Top Grass Roads

Grade Moderate

Time 2 days. Car park to Te Ao Tūpare, 2hr; to Stanfield Hut 2.5hr; to Cattle Creek Hut 2.5hr; to car park, 4hr

Distance 20km

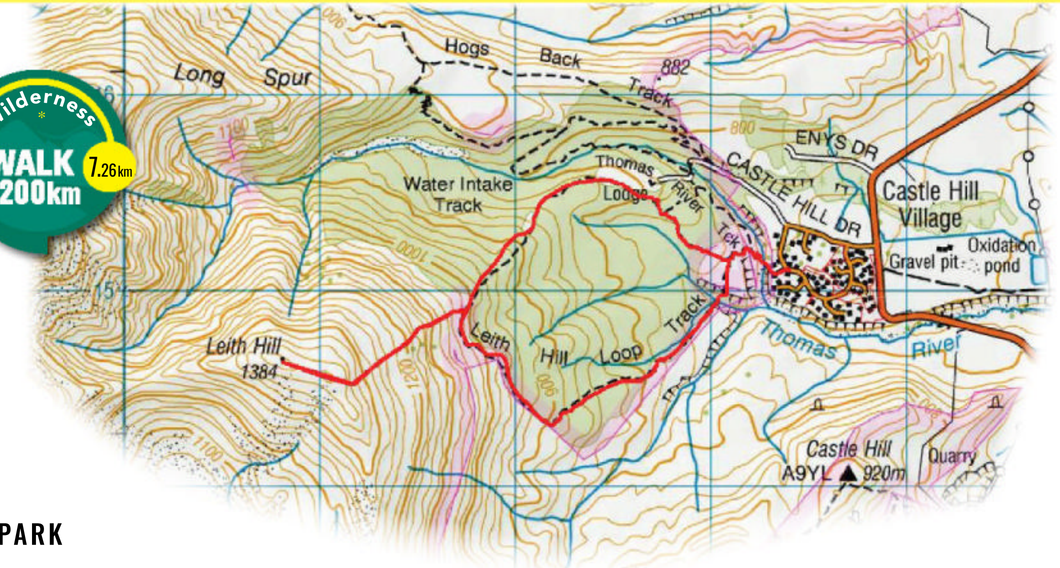
Total ascent 1556m

Accommodation Te Ao Tūpare/Traverse (A-Frame) Hut (free, 2 bunks), Stanfield Hut (standard, eight bunks), Cattle Creek Hut (standard, eight bunks)

Topo50 map BL36

DOWNLOAD Find the map and route notes for this trip at www.wildernessmag.co.nz

Wilderness WALK 1200km 7.26km


Long Spur
Hogs Back Track
882
800
ENYS DR
CASTLE HILL DR
Castle Hill Village
Gravel pit
Oxidation pond
Water Intake Track
Thomas Lodge
Thomas River Tck
Leith Hill 1384
Leith Hill Loop Track
1000
1100
1200
Thomas River
Castle Hill A9YL 920m
Quarry

LEITH HILL

CRAIGIEBURN FOREST PARK

A front-row seat from which to view the spectacular Craigieburn Range.

by **LISA AINLEY**

THERE ARE reminders of the past around Castle Hill Village before you face the present and begin the climb up the hill

In the mid-1860s' West Coast gold rush there was a hotel on the coach road (now SH73). Traces of it can be seen from Castle Hill Village. The village is less than 5km from Castle Hill's limestone rock formations, a natural, historical and cultural wonder of the South Island.

And, from the village, the marked trail to Leith Hill begins on Trelissick Loop.

Initially, it's a short gradual descent to Thomas River. If the river is low you might even keep your feet dry. The track then ascends to an open terrace between the bush and the river. Turn left at the junction onto the Leith Hill Loop Track, which crosses open ground before dropping into native bush with a slight descent to the river.

The now undulating trail wends in and out of bush and climbs 300m over the next couple of kilometres.

After crossing below a large erosion area known as 'The Depression', the track descends back into the bush.

The fun starts here, for the track is left behind and the route heads upwards.

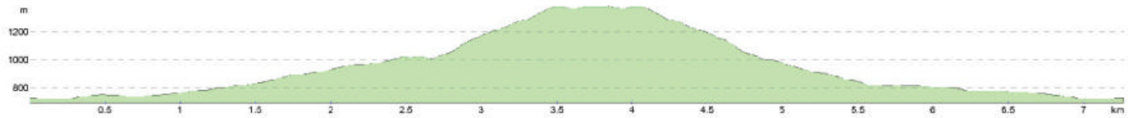
Keep The Depression to your left and head straight up literally following your nose through a mixture of scrubby open ground and patches of scree (or in snow during winter) on the quad-burning climb to the top.

Don't be fooled into thinking the cairn and flat area at the top signal the summit. Continue west until you can go no further without descending. This is the true 1384m summit of Leith Hill, and from here you can marvel at the grandeur of the Craigieburn Range.

Return is to the bush line to rejoin the Leith Hill Loop. This descends slowly past the junction with Magic Ponds Track to join Kids Bike Loop. Follow this track for 400m to the terrace and the junction with the Leith Hill Loop Track you started on. From here, return the same way to the track start.

WILDFILE

Access Castle Hill Village
Grade Easy–moderate
Time 4hr return
Distance 7.26km
Total ascent 702m
Topo50 map BW21



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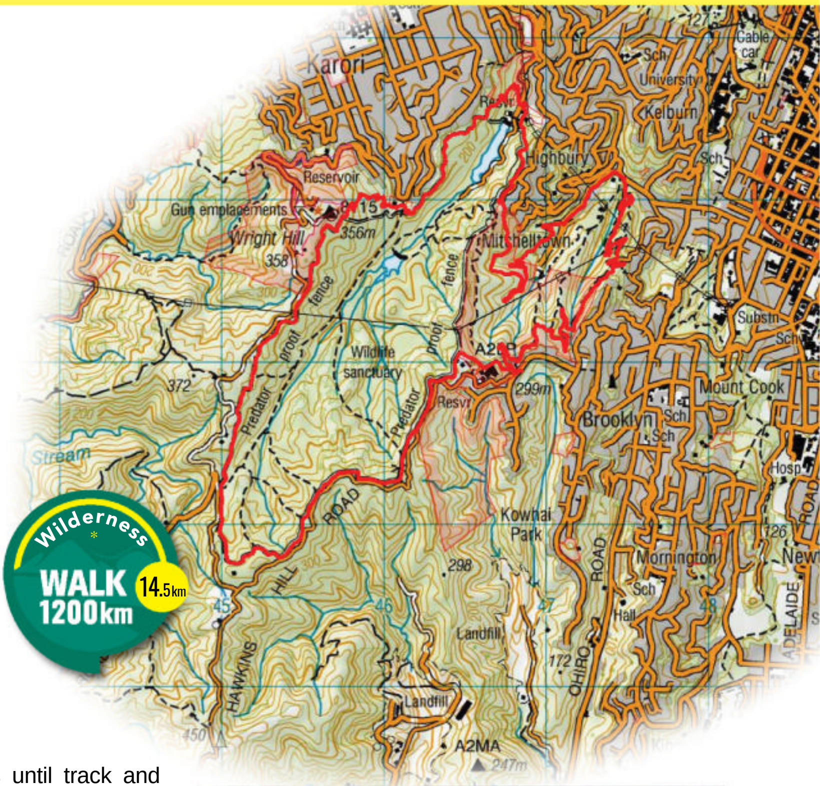


ZEALANDIA FENCELINE TRACK

WELLINGTON

Gain a true appreciation for the expanse and success of Wellington's fully fenced urban ecosanctuary on this journey around its perimeter.

by **ALI MIDDLETON**

THE ZEALANDIA Fenceline Tack follows the 8.6km predator-proof fence of Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne and provides spectacular hilltop views and access to various suburbs and other reserves. It is one of Wellington's best trail playgrounds.

There are several direct access points and this extended loop adds a number of the popular shared tracks through Waimapihi (formerly Polhill) Reserve. The reserve was established in 1989 and today is popular with cyclists, runners and walkers, and many native birds thanks to spillover from Zealandia.

At the entrance, follow the blue-topped marker poles along a series of tracks that lead to the Brooklyn wind turbine. The first is Transient, which climbs gradually through regenerating native bush and crosses bridges and boardwalks. After 3km is the first glimpse back over the valley and out to the harbour. A further 500m on are steps on the left, which provide a more energetic connection to Ashton Fitchett Drive and the Sawmill 4WD Track than the signposted zig-zags. Take your pick.

Continue uphill on the Sawmill 4WD Track until the fenceline is reached. There are great views over the city as well as WWII gun emplacements to pass.

The reasonably well-maintained 4WD Fenceline Track now sticks to the perimeter fence for the next 5km, initially climbing to the wind turbine (350m), then to the southwest corner of the sanctuary (370m), before descending and ascending again to Wrights Hill. A detour here goes to the Wrights Hill lookout and historic fortress.

Continue along the fenceline past several large pylons until track and fenceline head sharply downhill into bush, then Campbell Street and Waiapu Road. Again, there are expansive views across the sanctuary and to the harbour.

Cross the grass area at the bottom, pick up the track on the eastern side and follow the zigzags back to the fenceline. The track climbs briefly before another sharp right-hander, then left into Birdwood Reserve which avoids the extreme gradient of the fenceline.

Part-way down watch for the Waiapu Road Track, which turns right. After crossing the stream at the bottom, the track climbs briefly to Waiapu Road – the main access road to Zealandia.

Cross the road and clamber up the steep concrete zigzags and steps to rejoin the fenceline until wooden steps on the left of the trail are reached. It's up the steps and through some more bush before popping out onto the main trail before a final climb to the George Denton Park access on the left which signifies almost a full perimeter walk of Zealandia.

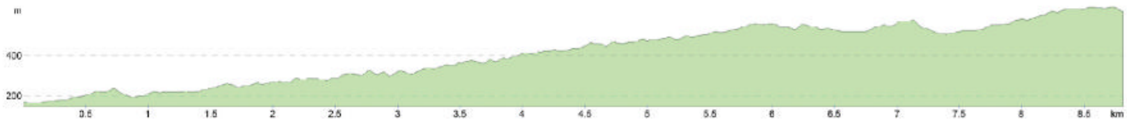
Cross George Denton Park and follow either the Clinical Track (longer with an easy gradient) or George Denton Track (shorter and steeper) down to Holloway Road – once again through Waimapihi Reserve. Finally, walk down Holloway Road back to Aro Street. Ⓦ

ALI MIDDLETON

The predator-proof fence stretches into the distance; ABOVE: Kererū and other birds now thrive across the city thanks to the sanctuary

WILDFILE

Access Waimapihi Reserve entrance, Aro Street
Grade Easy
Time 4–5hr
Distance 14.5km
Total ascent 577m
Topo50 Map BQ31



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In winter, Te Atuaoparapara offers an exciting ridge traverse

THRILLS AND SPILLS ON TE ATUAOPARAPARA

Wilderness WALK 1200km 21km

The popular summer circuit that takes in Sunrise Hut and Te Atuaoparapara makes for a thrilling ridge traverse when attempted in winter.

by
SAM HARRISON

Knees trembling, I look down at the runout below while balancing nervously on frozen scree. Somewhere on the side of survivable, I think.

But let's rewind to the previous night where this story really begins. We were five trampers happily starting up the track to Sunrise Hut in Ruahine Forest Park, thoughts firmly fixed on snuggling into our sleeping bags. It was 10pm, after all. I'd left my ice-axe in the car; we would turn around if conditions got gnarly.

The wide, benched track wound playfully through rimu and ponga forest. Three NZ Forest Service cullers spent three winters in the 1980s cutting this track by hand: an impressive feat. We caught the occasional glimpse of the twinkling towns of Hawke's Bay stretching for miles.

The track followed a few steep zig-zags before it left the bushline, and there was a light dusting of fresh snow on the ground. In front was Sunrise Hut, illuminated by the gentle orange glow of a fire burning inside.

The hut is situated in Buttercup Hollow and is one of the best-placed and most easily accessible huts in the North Island. Its history is about as Kiwi as it gets. In 1983, senior NZ Forest Service ranger Barrie Atkins heard there was $50,000 up for grabs for a project in the region. But there was a catch: the money had to be used within three weeks.

Barrie priced two kitset eight-bunk cabins from Fraemoh Homes in Christchurch (similar to Lockwood). One of these was promptly installed at Buttercup Hollow and named Sunrise Hut. The other became Barlow Hut, sited at Makaroro River to the north. Sunrise was extended in 2005 to increase its capacity to 20 bunks, and the sun has been rising on it for the past 40 years.

We watched the sunrise the following morning, but by the time we set off towards Armstrong Saddle, threatening clouds hovered overhead.

In July 1935 Hamish Armstrong crashed his de Havilland Gypsy Moth into the saddle in some particularly bad weather. The wreckage was found after two weeks; the only sign of Armstrong was a shirt branded Triple-X. (A hut near the trailhead now carries this name).

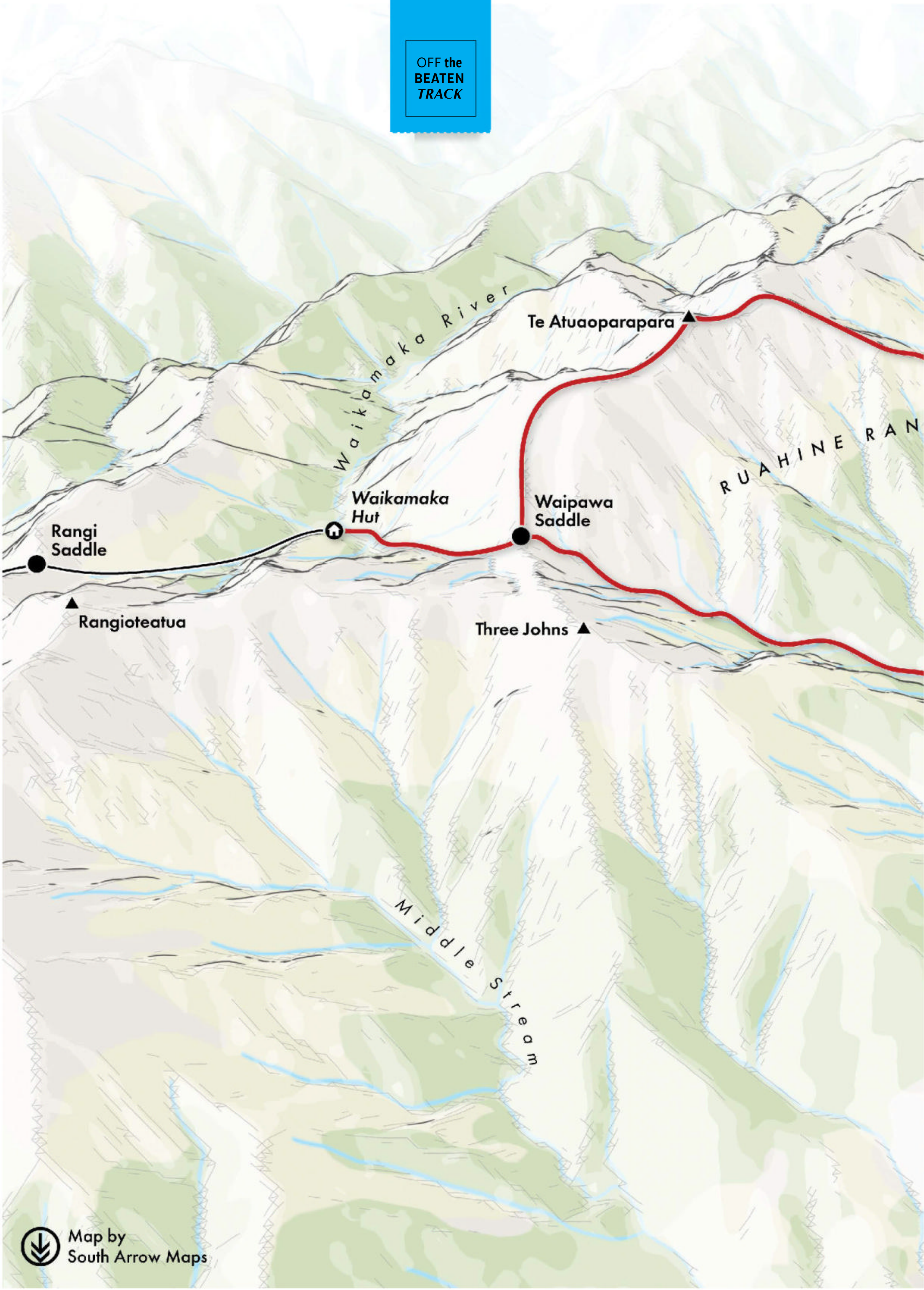
From Armstrong Saddle we followed the broad ridge to the west. Te Atuaoparapara towered above us shrouded by intermittent cloud. Then we too became enveloped, caught on the ridge as snow began to fall aggressively. Such conditions are not ideal when attempting to cross one of the most prominent peaks in the Ruahine Range, so we dropped our packs and beat a hasty retreat to bag Top Maropea Hut. Travel down the spur to this hut was fantastic – first out in the open then through the enchanted forest, which was dusted with snow. The hut was a cheerful Forest Service orange and sat in a large clearing – perfect for lying outside with a book on a long summer's day. However, all our snacks were on the main ridge with our packs. After signing the hut book, we were forced once more into the bush.

The Ruahine Range offers some steep and impressively eroded landscapes

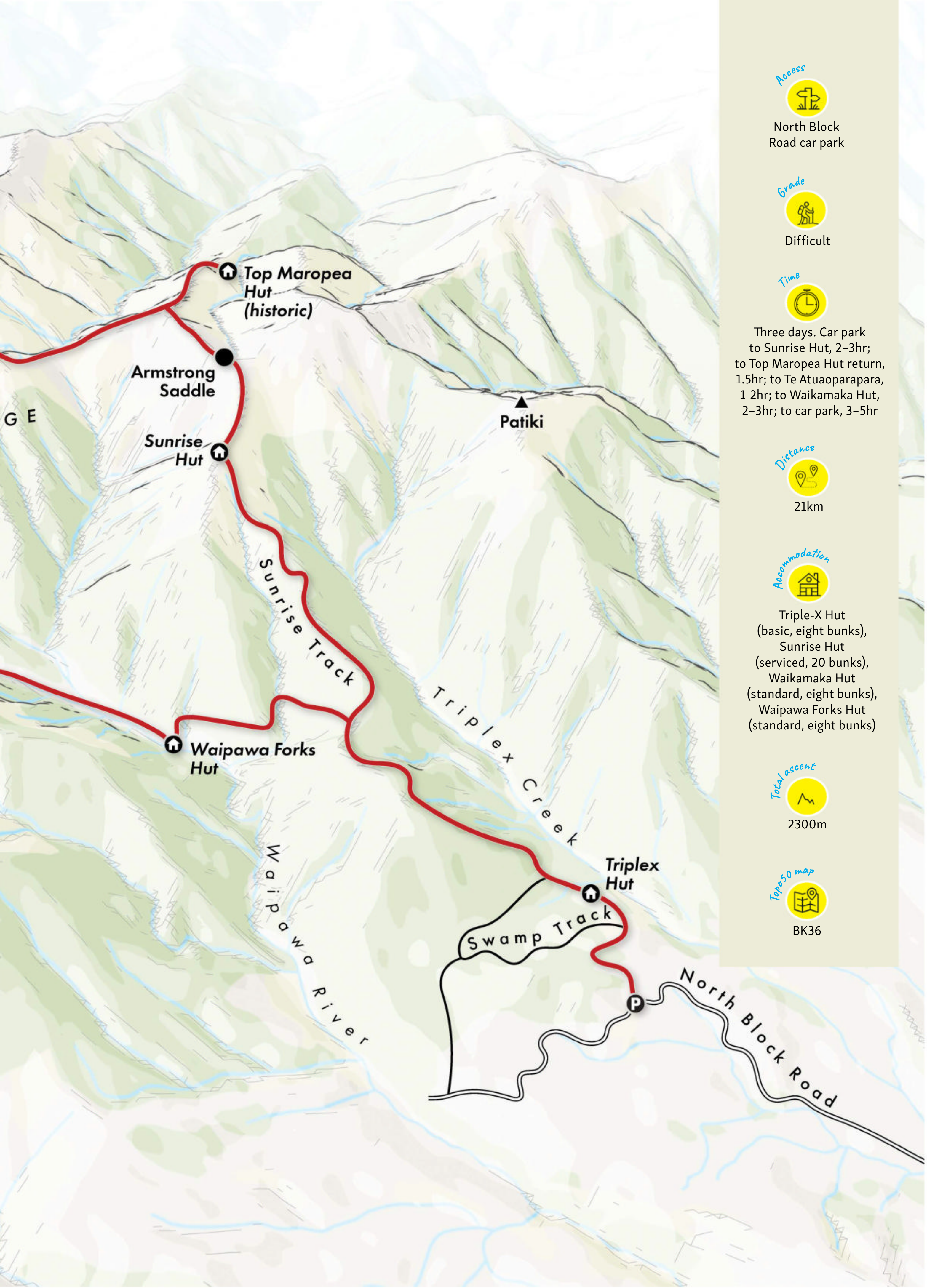
> ALL WAS GOING WELL UNTIL A VOICE AT THE FRONT OF THE PARTY SAID, "SAM, I DON'T LIKE THIS, I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE BIT!"

The weather had cleared on the main ridge, but we were tortured by having to drop down to another saddle before starting to climb Te Atuaoparapara proper. Impressive scars were raked across the hillside to the left where the ridge dropped into the steeply eroded valley. A blazed trail led through a dense mix of tūpare (leatherwood) and harakeke before opening to more pleasant tussock slopes. The snow was gathering in ever larger piles and we were soon stomping over completely frozen grasses. It took one final grunt to bring us to the snow-covered summit ridge that curled up to the peak. The ridge was picturesque, but the wind whistled straight through our bones as we stood at the ice-encrusted trig and looked out across Hawke's Bay and other Ruahine peaks.

→


Waikamaka River
Te Atuaoparapara
RUAHINE RAN
Waikamaka Hut
Waipawa Saddle
Rangi Saddle
Rangioteatua
Three Johns
Middle Stream

Map by South Arrow Maps


Top Maropea Hut (historic)
Armstrong Saddle
G E
Sunrise Hut
Patiki
Sunrise Track
Triplex Creek
Waipawa Forks Hut
Waipawa River
Triplex Hut
Swamp Track
P
North Block Road

Access

North Block
Road car park

Grade

Difficult

Time

Three days. Car park
to Sunrise Hut, 2–3hr;
to Top Maropea Hut return,
1.5hr; to Te Atuaoparapara,
1-2hr; to Waikamaka Hut,
2–3hr; to car park, 3–5hr

Distance

21km

Accommodation

Triple-X Hut
(basic, eight bunks),
Sunrise Hut
(serviced, 20 bunks),
Waikamaka Hut
(standard, eight bunks),
Waipawa Forks Hut
(standard, eight bunks)

Total ascent

2300m

Topo50 map

BK36

The southern side of Te Atuaoparapara is more challenging than the northern side, especially in snow; A broad ridge leads to the summit of Te Atuaoparapara

We peered over the southern side of Te Atuaoparapara with some trepidation. Our route was to Waipawa Saddle. It's popular among experienced trampers as a summer trip, but I had not read of anyone doing it in winter. However, time was on our side and the snow conditions were good, so with a healthy dose of youthful optimism we decided to give it a crack.

A steep but manageable section leading from the trig became a mangled mess of rock. A scree slope dropped to the west, presumably with bluffs hidden somewhere to make any accidental trip more exciting. It wasn't clear whether it would be better to go over the jagged rocks or beneath them. Our bet was under and it paid off; travel down on the western side was good, our boots biting satisfyingly into scree and firm snow. This section of rock gave way to a windswept spur that led to a broader plateau some 60m below. All was going well until a voice at the front of the party said, "Sam, I don't like this, I don't like this one bit!"

The wind had swept the snow from the spur leaving a thick layer of ice. This was a dilemma. We were close to being off the peak, but there was still 60m between us and a safe path. None of us had snow gear – a choice we made because some in our group didn't know how to use it. Perhaps rashly, I decided we should push on. Cautiously, I came to the front of the party, struggling for traction on the slick ground. I dropped down the leeward side of the spur using a snow bank to descend. This was going better than expected – or it was until my footing started to give way and my body jolted downward. I managed to stop myself by plunging my hands into the snow. Looking down, those 60m appeared much further than they had just seconds before. By kicking firm steps in the snow I avoided any other mishaps and was soon down on safe ground. It was then a matter of relaying packs down the hill and taking time with less experienced members until we were all in the clear.

From there it was relatively smooth sailing. We passed frozen tarns that would make for great camping in warmer months, before continuing to the end of the flat ridge. The route took us further than seemed intuitive, but we found a set of sturdy cairns that marked the way to Waipawa Saddle.

We went down the Waikamaka, hopping from one side of the river to the other until we reached Waikamaka Hut. Perhaps the most notable feature of the Heretaunga Tramping Club's hut is the long-drop, which is shaped like a rocket ship. That night we reflected on the day and concluded that we should each have had an ice axe for the descent from the spur. Another learning opportunity.

> Time was on our side and the snow conditions were good, so with a healthy dose of youthful optimism we decided to give it a crack.

The next day we waited for the sun before setting off back up the river, which was frozen solid. We were soon back at Waipawa Saddle, looking east down the Waipawa River to the farmland beyond. The tussock in the valley gave way to tūpare, making us grateful for the cut track until we emerged onto a stony riverbank. We stopped at Waipawa Forks Hut for lunch and had to search for the overgrown entrance to the track to the car park. It was upstream from the hut, contrary to what the map showed.

Back on the Sunrise Track in the daylight we were able to appreciate its quality: a highway through the forest compared to our experience the previous day.

Walking through the lush forest, I reflected that Te Atuaoparapara is a magnificent mountain for trampers but one that should be treated with respect (and an ice-axe).

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ELEVEN PEAKS *in* one winter

AN ENTHUSIASTIC SKIER AND CLIMBER PAYS HER RESPECTS TO 11 RUAPEHU PEAKS IN THE COURSE OF ONE WINTER, TRACING THEIR NAMES THROUGH THE DECADES AS SHE GOES.

by HAZEL PHILLIPS

Hazel celebrates reaching the summit of Te Heuheu

→

Hazel and Tanja celebrate their birthdays on the summit of Dome; BELOW: Hazel ascends to the crater ridge leading up to Tukino Peak and Te Heuheu

One winter, when I set out to climb and hopefully ski Mt Ruapehu's 11 summit peaks, another interest intervened and I began tracing the history of the naming conventions on my favourite mountain.

Which are summit peaks? It depends on who you talk to, and which topo map you look at. For me, it was Tahurangi (2797m), Te Ataahua (2757m), Paretetaitonga (2751m), Te Heuheu (2732m), Tukino Peak (2720m), Dome (2672m), Cathedral Rocks (2663m), Pyramid Peak (2645m), Glacier Knob (2642m), Girdlestone (2658m), and Ringatoto (2591m). However, some climbers reckon you should also count L Peak (2580m), a wee tooth next to Pyramid Peak that is not named or marked on the topo map, and the Clocktower (2480m), a rocky outcrop on the ridge separating the Whangaehu Glacier from the Mangatoetoenui Glacier – which I dismissed as utter folly. Eleven peaks would do. I hadn't been anywhere near eight of them. It would suit nicely for a winter project.

Dome was the first peak. I was there multiple times over winter. It's a doddle – a quick puff up from the Whakapapa Col or the Summit Plateau. The key summit was a jaunt on my fortieth birthday when I took my friend and birthday twin Tanja with me (she turned 28 the same day). Tanja hadn't ever been up Ruapehu and we were both delighted with an uncharacteristically soft and gentle ski back down the glacier. A couple of workers up the T-bar towers were surprised when we suddenly emerged, zipping down next to them, hollering with happiness. Dome is otherwise, but not commonly, known as Patatau; I saw this indicated on an old map from the 1940s and found a mention in a 1954 English climbing journal of a trip to Te Wai-ā-moe / Crater Lake. It mostly flies under the radar, with minimal noise on topo maps until indicated as a peak proper on the 1989 map.

Tanja and I had attempted Paretetaitonga that same day, but the weather eventually closed in on us. I went back later with ski touring buddies, Cam and Nate. They bought into my madcap plan, trusting me far more than they should have. We ascended the Far West T-bar, traversed to the spine running up the ridge next to the Whakapapa Glacier and then navigated a few ice obstacles on the ridge to reach Paretetaitonga. It took hours longer than expected. Nate led each obstacle, a challenge requiring front-pointing on crampons. I snapped a crampon attachment but duct tape saved the day. Near the top I looked down and told Nate that I'd prefer to find another way. He cackled with laughter and started downclimbing, leaving me little choice but to harden up and follow. We skied off the slope to the Whakapapa Col and battled tired legs skiing down the glacier itself. Cam was not impressed, and I feel it is no coincidence that he moved to Africa soon after.

As early as 1934, suggestions of a name correction were being made in the newspapers. A local man wrote in to say "the right thing has not been done" in naming Ruapehu as one collective peak, becuase it was divided up by the various peaks we now accept. Paretetaitonga means 'a wall, or parapet, on the southern side', and the local believed that Girdlestone was actually meant to be called Paretetaitonga. "This, in my opinion, is a bad example of Pākehā interference, and a day must come when this matter will have to be adjusted."

Girdlestone was previously called Little Matterhorn and shows on early maps as Matterhorn Peak. It was named after Hubert (Hugh) Girdlestone, an enthusiastic outdoorsman who surveyed the district, summiting Ruapehu at least 14 times. Girdlestone was a settlement surveyor and Ruapehu lover who ignored the peak’s proper name, Peretini, and dubbed it Little Matterhorn. Around 1912, Girdlestone swam across Crater Lake, which today would be considered wildly culturally inappropriate or offensive, as well as dangerous because of the pH levels. He was killed by shrapnel in his sleep during the First World War and his 1921 obituary in the *Manawatū Times* claimed: ‘It is fitting that amongst the old Māori names one peak should perpetuate a European name honoured alike by the Pākehās and Māoris, for amongst the native race Girdlestone had many true friends.’

A ski touring buddy and frequent contributor to the touring community, Ron Thomas, suggested on social media that Girdlestone’s rightful name was Peretini. Indeed, local iwi Ngāti Rangi know Girdlestone as Peretini, and when Ruapehu Alpine Lifts rebranded itself in 2019, the new Tūroa slogan showed ‘the three peaks of Mt Ruapehu that are visible from Tūroa, which are Tahurangi, Paretetaitonga and Peretini’. This conflicts with the ‘other Peretini’. Some alpine climbing material and at least one book refer to Pyramid Peak (2645m) as Peretini, or Peretina. Likewise, the English climbing journal I referred to earlier also calls it Cinder Peak: ‘On the east side of the lake rises a cone of scoriae (cinders) and ash, culminating in Cinder Peak (Peretini), often called the Pyramid.’

So far, so confusing.

I visited Pyramid Peak from the Whakapapa Glacier with a climbing buddy on a bender to get as much snow time as we could before winter turned to spring. We skinned up the glacier, went to Pyramid and had a blazingly hot ski down the Whangaehu Glacier in soft spring corn. From there we visited Cathedral Rocks and Glacier →

GIRDLESTONE WAS PREVIOUSLY CALLED LITTLE MATTERHORN AND SHOWS ON EARLY MAPS AS MATTERHORN PEAK.

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LITTLE THINGS MATTER

Crater Lake and Summit Plateau as seen from Tahurangi

Knob, both in a whiteout. Cathedral Rocks' te reo name, Matihao, has unfortunately been wiped off the latest topo map. Its last appearance as 'Matihao (Cathedral Rocks)' is on the 1979 map; before that it was just Matihao.

The next day we greeted Te Heuheu and Tukino Peak, and climbed straight to the saddle just south of Tukino Peak as an 'extra for experts' task, two axes each. Neither peak has an English name but are named after Te Heuheu Tūkino IV, paramount chief of Ngāti Tuwharetoa.

We were up again the next day to finish the job, aiming to go to Te Ataahua from the Mangaturuturu col and straight along the ridge to Tahurangi. It was spicy, hairy – the exposure at one point made me dizzy and I questioned my life choices. Cam was behind me, joining our adventure in spite of the dally I'd taken him on to reach Paretetaitonga. (Te Ataahua, incidentally, isn't named on maps, but is indicated as a dot and a height.) We turned a couple of icy, crusty obstacles on the ridge – delicate work – skis strapped to our packs, two axes each, and prayers to each individual's deity of choice.

> **WE CLIMBED STRAIGHT TO THE SADDLE JUST SOUTH OF TUKINO PEAK AS AN 'EXTRA FOR EXPERTS' TASK, TWO AXES EACH.**

It seemed endless, but we reached Tahurangi col, admired the crater lake, climbed to Tahurangi itself – the highest point in the North Island; the Mt Cook of the North Island if you like, and at one point called 'Ruapehu Peak' – and while I was mentally preparing to climb back down again, Cam decided he'd ski off the ridge. There exists, somewhere, some appalling footage of me skiing off this ridge in very bad form, footage I will gladly pay to suppress. We skied (I side-slipped, mostly) eastwards down the Wahianoa Glacier, battling breakable crust for far too many contour lines until we hit softer snow. Cam made a fair go of some legitimate turns while I sweated with stress. We passed avalanche debris and reached a reasonable bench around the 2200m mark, and from there alternated between skinning and traversing the base of Girdlestone to reach the Mangaehuehu Glacier. After that it was a soft and glorious hero-snow ski down to the Ngā Wai Heke chair and Tūroa base, unfortunately not in time for a celebratory tipple but in plenty of time for a substitute Ohakune chocolate éclair.

The final hurrah is seared into my memory: Ringatoto. It's now known on the map as Ringatoto Peak but it was only 1989 that it was designated as Mitre Peak – a disappointing and confusing name as there is a much more widely known Mitre Peak in Fiordland, and also one in the Tararua Range. The name lacked imagination.

Ringatoto's north-eastern aspect is bluffy but it allows a relatively easy summit to the col between the peak and Tahurangi. We left Tukino at the crack of dawn and skinned high beyond Whangaehu Hut, briefly donning crampons to navigate the icy southern face near the hut before transitioning again to skins, making it up the snow bridges of the Whangaehu outlet. Rocks and ice fell from northerly aspects but the route to the col was clear and skinnable most of the way.

We topped out with skis on packs and dawdled along the low-slung ridge to say hello to the peak. The hot day allowed not only lunch on the ridge but also T-shirt weather while climbing and a roasting ski back down. The steep entry from the col back to the Whangaehu had me clenching hard but I made it, and after a short climb back to Whangaehu Hut, as we'd lost too much height, we were treated to a memorable ski to Tukino base. Eleven peaks in the bag across the course of one winter.

Ron Thomas confesses to having skied all Ruapehu peaks from their summits, but quietly, and "only ever when te maunga lets me, out of pure respect and patience over 32 years". Maybe one day we'll see the te reo names reinstated: Peretini, Matihao and Patatau once more gracing our maps.

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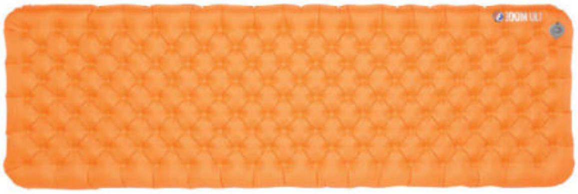

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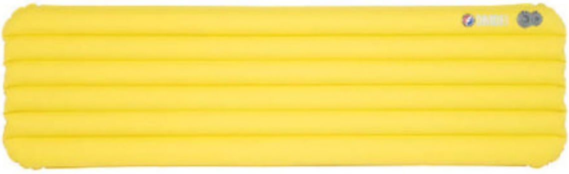

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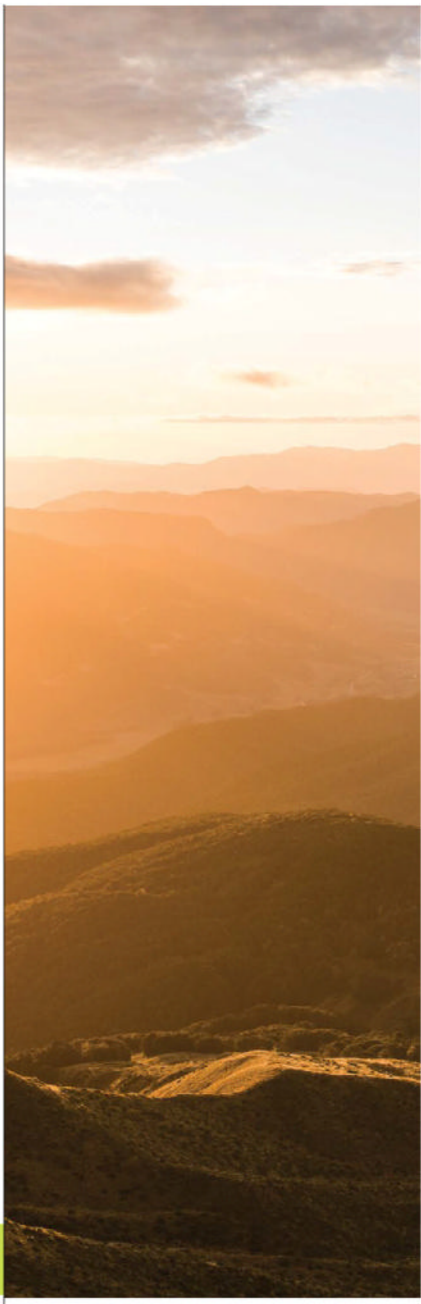

DENNIS RADERMACHER

HOW STUFF WORKS

by
TARA PAPWORTH

Is thru-hiking bad for me? A single question morphed into this 12-page feature in which experts answer the burning questions on so many trampers' minds.

In the golden hour, light appears softer and warmer and long shadows are cast

Why is the golden hour so good for photography?

The hour before sunset and after sunrise are known as the ‘golden’ or ‘magic’ hours. The sun is lower in the sky, which provides the best light to capture the best photos.

Christchurch photographer Dennis Radermacher regularly shoots at these times. “It’s a magic thing. It’s very pretty light,” he says. “Two effects come together: the angle of the light and the amount of air the light travels through. When the sun is low in the sky, light hits the ground at a flat angle and casts long shadows, and is softened because it travels through a lot more air. Moisture in the atmosphere also helps scatter the light, and you end up with directional sunlight that’s soft and warm.”

Soft lighting is flattering, warm light creates an orange glow often associated with calm and happiness. Colours and contrasts are more vibrant.

“To appreciate light, it needs to be in contrast to something, such as the absence of light, like the shadows,” says Radermacher.

What do walking poles actually help with?

A 2020 review of walking pole research in *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine* collated many studies to determine whether poles helped or hindered.

The authors concluded that the studies showed poles can provide better balance and reduce load through the hip, knee and ankle joints, but users will burn more energy doing it: ‘Trekking poles decrease lower extremity loading and forces but increase cardiovascular demand. When carrying a large external load, trekking poles may offer benefit by decreasing lower extremity muscle activity and increasing balance and stability.’

Poles can also help you walk faster, especially with a heavy load or when walking uphill. The studies showed that the use of poles allows a more normal walking pattern, including a ‘longer stride length and a less flexed knee at heel strike.’

Poles increase balance and stability

Do plants really suffer from being walked on?

Len Gillman, recently retired as Professor of Ecology and Biogeography at Auckland University of Technology has a lifetime of experience working with New Zealand flora. He says plants don’t feel pain, but “it depends what’s meant by suffering”.

“If it’s ‘do they feel pain?’, then no, because they don’t have a nervous system. But if it’s ‘can you damage them?’ then yes, you can definitely damage plants by walking on them.”

Gillman has worked in Antarctica with 200-year-old mosses, which would be killed if stood on. “It depends on the plant and its environment. A lot of plants are quite resilient to animals and people tramping all over them. But others, like the Antarctic moss, can suffer significant damage.”

Gillman says there are some environments where plants are particularly susceptible to trampling: “Often plants that grow in bogs are much more vulnerable, which is why boardwalks are put in boggy areas,” he says.

Damage in New Zealand is much greater from tahr, goats and deer than from people, says Gillman. “The damage these animals cause, especially in the high country, is horrendous. They can wipe out entire herb fields of endangered plants. Damage from people tends to be localised to around tracks.”

MATTHEW CHAN

Fresh meals are yummier and contain more nutrients, but freeze-dried or dehydrated foods are much lighter

IS FRESH FOOD BETTER THAN DEHYDRATED OR FREEZE-DRIED FOOD?

Freeze-drying, as the name suggests, slowly freezes and dries food under a vacuum, removing all the moisture. Food retains its shape and structure, much like a honeycomb, so that when water is added the structure fills and quickly rehydrates.

Dehydrated food is dried by long exposure to heat, which shrivels the food, often with a skin on.

Founder of Real Meals Nathan Fa`avae says the key differences between fresh food and dehydrated or freeze-dried are nutritional value, convenience and weight.

“Freeze-drying retains practically all the nutritional value of the food; the loss of nutrition is generally under one per cent,” he says. “Dehydrated food can sometimes lose more than this – it still has energy, it’s just not as nutrient-dense.”

One of the main advantages freeze-dried or dehydrated food has over fresh food is convenience. Fa`avae says: “You can make a fairly complicated, tasty meal with a cup of boiling water that would be very difficult to assemble on location using fresh food, because of the amount of ingredients needed.”

The other is weight. “They’re so light,” says Fa`avae. “Freeze-drying removes about 80 per cent, if not more, of the weight from a meal. Dehydrated food is only slightly heavier. Carrying 20–25 per cent of the weight of fresh food can make a huge difference to a load.”

LEN GILLMAN

Lichen grows as does any plant using photosynthesis

How can lichen grow on rocks?

Lichens come in many colours, sizes and forms and are sometimes plant-like. But they’re not plants, says Professor Len Gillman.

“Lichen is a combination of two organisms that come from entirely different kingdoms: the thallus, or fungal, part of it and within that, an algae,” he says. “The algae can photosynthesise, the fungus can’t. The two organisms work together to produce the lichen.”

When lichen attaches to a rock, it can grow as does any plant using photosynthesis. Its minerals largely come from dust particles that float on top of it or from the surface of the rock.

“They’re an amazingly versatile combination of organisms. They grow in extreme, inhospitable environments, where all other vegetation has disappeared.”

HOW do blisters form?

Rebecca Rushton BSC(Pod) is a podiatrist and blister thought-leader. In a recent research article published in the Journal of Athletic Training, Rushton challenged the common notion that blisters are caused by heat, moisture and friction. She argues that foot friction blisters are caused by repetitive shear deformation. There are three elements, including motion of bone, high friction force and repetition of the resulting shear events. 'Rubbing at the skin surface is not a mechanism for friction blister formation,' she said.

Rushton writes: 'Think of it as the bones moving back and forth while the force of friction keeps the surface of your skin stationary. Friction isn't rubbing – it's the opposite – it's the force that resists rubbing. There's a lot of resistance to rubbing between your skin, sock and shoe – so much so that they all stay in stationary contact for longer than you think. Yet the bones move back and forth, and everything in between is made to stretch and distort.'

Blisters start with initial redness, followed by blanching, then a small pleat in the epidermis which subsequently fills with fluid. Rushton says the key to blister prevention is to reduce the friction with lubricants, blister powders, double socks and so on. The strategy is to make the skin's surface move in sync with the bones with resulting lower shear distortions.

Why do Powelliphanta snails drop their shells?

TOBY ROBERTS

An empty Powelliphanta shell means the snail that made it has died

"They don't," says mollusc specialist Kerry Walton, an invertebrate curator at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. "An empty shell is because the snail that made it has died."

Walton is an external member of the Department of Conservation threat classification group for these giant land snails, which can weigh as much as a tūī. "Several species of Powelliphanta snail are critically endangered and many populations are showing alarming trends of decline.

"They're extremely vulnerable to rats, weka, pigs and possums. Large herbivores also impact the snails by degrading the undergrowth, which makes it easier for predators to find snails and puts them at increased risk of dehydration."

Walton says historical shell collection has contributed to the decline of some species. "All Powelliphanta species are now protected by the Wildlife Act – the same protection that applies to kiwi and tuatara – so they should be left alone if trampers encounter them."

WHY DO RAINCOATS LOSE EFFECTIVENESS OVER TIME?

Greg Foord, manager for outdoor equipment distributor Spelean, knows a thing or two about raincoats.

“Waterproof jackets are treated with a durable water-repellent (DWR),” he says. “It’s generally applied to the fabric’s exterior, so the material doesn't absorb water and get saturated. When the finish is in good condition, water droplets bead and roll off.”

Over time, the water repellent deteriorates. “There are several reasons,” Foord says. “The way the jacket is washed, how often it’s washed, abrasion from packs or things on the track, general heavy use or pollutants from having a dirty jacket.”

Foord says it’s a myth that you shouldn’t wash your waterproofs. “Pollutants degrade the DWR so it’s less water resistant. Fabric breathability will also be reduced making the inside of the jacket sticky and dirty.”

Foord advises using a mild soap or a special wash for technical waterproof and breathable fabrics and using a clothes dryer on a low heat afterwards to help reactivate the DWR.

“A waterproof jacket usually lasts three to five years. However, with proper care and cleaning, it can last up to 10 years if you re-proof every so often.”

Are gaiters worth it?

Gaiters keep feet dry and protect boots, legs and clothing

Yes, says the director of Hiking New Zealand Dan Murphy. He adds that the need for gaiters depends on the track and expected conditions. “If I know I’m going to be doing off-track hiking, river crossings, or if there’s going to be snow, I’ll definitely take my gaiters. You can skip across a creek that’s below gaiter height and not get wet.”

Gaiters are worn over the shoe and bottom of the leg, usually to mid-calf. They’re made of sturdy weather-resistant materials and are designed to protect the foot and lower leg from snow, water, or debris.

“In rough, challenging terrain, especially in the backcountry, they’ll stop grit, mud and stones getting into boots and protect your legs from vegetation,” says Murphy.

WHY ARE YKK ZIPS USED ON EVERYTHING?

“Because they’re so good,” says David Ellis from Earth Sea Sky. “They have honed their craft so much that no one has come close to offering the range or technology they offer. They’re way ahead of the game.”

The Japanese company is the world’s largest zipper manufacturer and has been operating since 1934, registering the YKK trademark in 1946. It produces fasteners and architectural products in 71 countries.

Macpac’s Martin Tatchell agrees with Ellis. “Anything else is seen as less superior. Their brand name adds value and quality to a product.”

How does odour control treatment in clothing work?

"Synthetic fibres are solid, so if anything comes off your skin, like bacteria or odour, it just sits on the surface of the fibre and builds up, creating a smell until it's washed," says David Ellis.

"Once you wash something, detergents normally clear out the surface and it returns to normal odour-free conditions. Polypropylene has very rough surfaces. So when odour particles come off the skin and contact the surface of the fibre, it will 'lock' onto the synthetic's surface. This is difficult to prise off with detergent."

Odour control is a surface treatment that prevents anything from attaching to the fibre. Clothing becomes odour resistant and easy to wash and clean. However, it's worth noting that their effectiveness is reduced over time.

Odour control treatments prevent odour-casuing bacteria clinging to the garment's fibres

DO WALKING POLES REALLY DAMAGE TRACKS?

The unprotected tips of walking poles are known to damage tracks

A study in 2011 by DOC project manager John Wilton on pole usage on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing estimated 20 per cent of people walking the track used poles. Of those, only two per cent had fitted the protective rubber cap to their poles.

Wilton noted: 'In general, walkers treading on the track surface have a positive effect, compacting the capping and forcing disturbed stones and fines back into the matrix.'

While scuffing from booted feet disturbs the integrity of the surface, unprotected walking poles created far more track damage: 'The tips are forced into the surface, creating holes and disturbance far greater than normal footfall. The damage is also more apparent on the sides of the track where the surface is softer.'

Wilton calculated that a hiking pole with an unprotected tip creates a pressure of 3000kPa on the track surface, yet a pole fitted with a rubber cap creates just 70kPa. 'It's not possible to build a track with an aggregate surface that will withstand the penetrative pressures of an unprotected tip.'

By contrast, Wilton said rubber tips create a positive compacting effect on the surface.

IS THERE ACTUALLY A CHANCE I'LL GET SHOT BY A HUNTER?

"You're probably more likely to hurt yourself getting out of the car at the trailhead," says New Zealand Deerstalkers Association chief executive officer Gwyn Thurlow.

"Hunters are licensed, permitted and trained," says Thurlow. "All hunters in New Zealand are police vetted and need to have a licence, hunting permit, have passed safety tests and have a responsibility to follow the Firearms Safety Code."

Hunting isn't allowed around public facilities or walking tracks. "Generally, trampers and hunters go into different parts of the bush. The government also closes areas to hunting at peak tramping times or in popular tramping locations to minimise any encounters."

Nearly 200,000 people hunt in New Zealand each year, and there have been 41 recorded hunting fatalities between 2007 and 2016. Of these, only 54 per cent involved a firearm.

Thurlow advises trampers to talk to hunters about safety if they're worried: "Open up the conversation. Share your plans so everyone knows where everyone is going to be."

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How do hollow-fibre water filters work?

Hollow-fibre filters allow water to pass through but block larger microbiological threats

Inside a hollow-fibre water filter, there are hundreds of tiny straw-like tubes filled with microscopic holes or pores.“Water is pushed through the wall of these semipermeable membranes, and the pores stop the larger microbiological threats getting through,” says Sandy McLean, who sells Platypus and MSR filters in New Zealand.

Depending on the nature of the hollow fibre membrane, threats such as viruses and bacteria are removed from the water and held in the wall of the fibre: “In essence,” says McLean, “hollow fibres are catching the bad guys and letting the good water transfer through.”

When uncompressed, down expands – or lofts – to trap pockets of air

High-top boots are likely to be sturdier and more stable than shoes

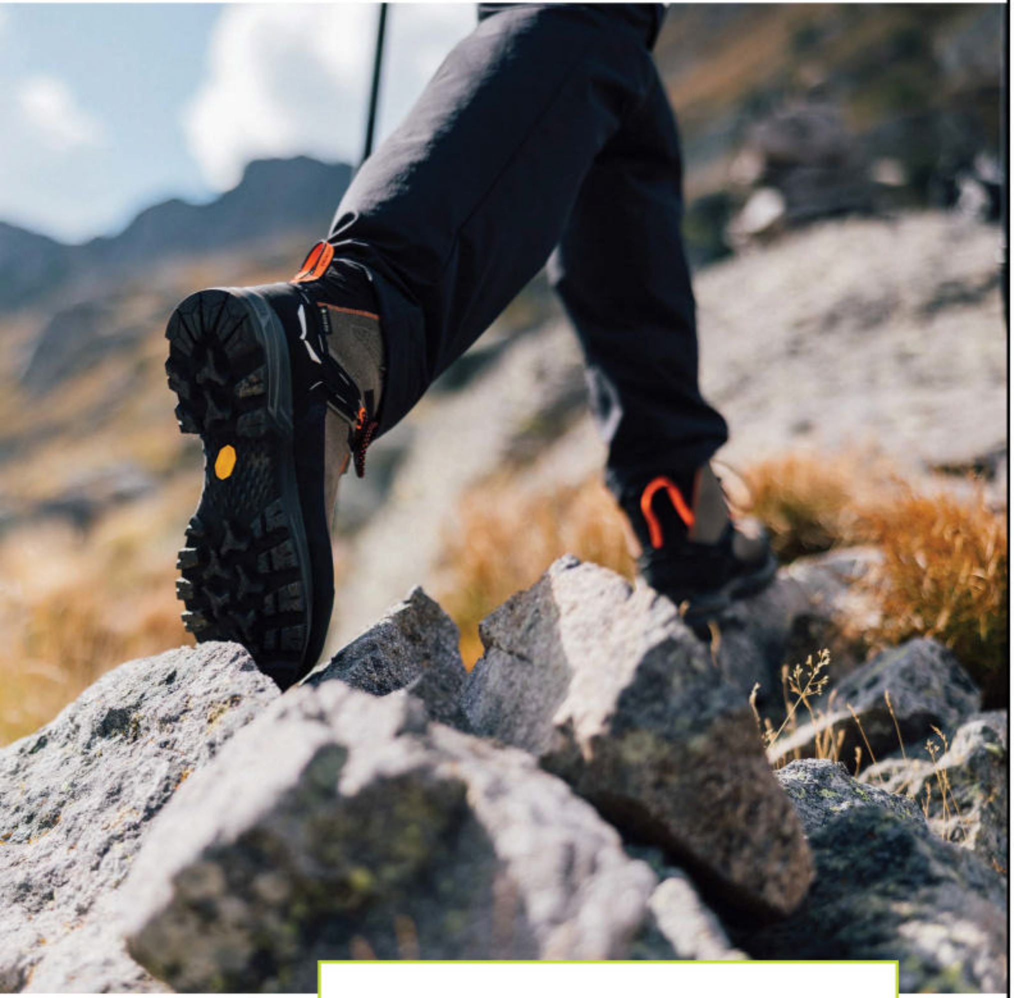
How long can I keep a down sleeping bag stuffed before it’s ruined?

Down clusters consist of filaments that grow from a central quill point and look like dandelion pods. The clusters expand or ‘loft’ to fill space and trap tiny pockets of air within the filaments to create thousands of insulating pockets.

But they’re very fragile and once damaged they lose the ability to trap air.

Neil Stichbury from Outfitters NZ, distributor for Rab, says how a bag is stored can cause more damage than stuffing and removing a bag into a cram sac. “It’s prolonged compression that destroys the microscopic filaments on a cluster,” he says. “Ideally after every use a bag should be dried, aired and placed into its mesh storage sac, ideally off the floor where air can circulate.”

Stichbury says the answer to ‘how long can I keep a down bag stuffed’ is: “Don’t! Try and preserve it as much as you can.”



DO HIGH-TOP BOOTS OFFER MORE SUPPORT AND STABILITY THAN HIKING SHOES?

Gary Melhuish, distributor of Salewa footwear, says it's a misconception that hiking boots' core purpose is providing extra ankle support.

"A key benefit is support," he says, "but boots also provide ankle protection from rocks and abrasions and are more durable over rough ground. Generally, you can carry heavier loads while wearing a quality boot."

He says that a boot's stability may be due to its overall build rather than provision of ankle support: "A quality outsole will have specific zones for overall grip, traction and braking. Midsole materials could differ between a boot and a shoe. For example, hiking shoes may use soft cushioning compounds, while higher end boots may use a denser midsole which is less prone to compression and provides a more stable platform."

Boot uppers are also more sturdy than those on shoes. "Leather used on boots is usually thicker and the use of a protective rubber rand is more extensive on boots. Hiking shoes are generally lighter and more flexible."

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Are women's sleeping bags really warmer than men's?

"No," says Neil Stitchbury. "But they often have a slightly different shape and the insulation is distributed in different places.

"If I held them up and asked you to tell the difference, you would find it hard," he says. "Supposedly, women feel the cold in different places to men.

A woman's sleeping bag is likely to have more down in the foot and hip areas."

IS WOOL WARMER THAN POLYPRO?

It depends, says AgResearch textile technologist Stewart Collie: "Fundamentally the smaller the diameter of the fibre (micron), the more warmth retention because there's more surface area to help trap air, and it's the trapped air that does the insulating. That's an advantage to synthetics as they can be produced consistently at a set size.

"Polypro can be as fine as they want and merino wool used for socks is typically no finer than 18 micron."

Based on that, you'd expect polypro to be warmer. But wool has a natural crimp, explains Collie: "This crimp (especially in merino) increases the space available for capturing air, which increases the heat retention," he says.

Wool is also warmer in wetter conditions: "Wool actively produces heat when it absorbs moisture. Polypropylene has no ability to absorb moisture into the fibre. So in that sense, wool's warmer."

Is thru-hiking bad for me?

Thru-hiking is the act of hiking a long-distance trail end-to-end continuously over several months. It's an extended period of physical activity that impacts your body and health.

And, there's a high chance of injury. Several studies show 40–60 per cent of hikers experience at least one injury during their hike; the most common are knee pain and blisters. Hiking's prolonged and repetitive movement can induce repetitive stress injuries. However, the same studies show these injuries can be reduced with adequate planning, training and gear.

Thru-hikers are also prone to diarrhoea or gastrointestinal complaints, often caused by lack of access to clean water and poor hygiene practices.

In 2021 a study published by The Physiological Society showed how combining high periods of physical activity and consuming a nutrient-poor, calorically-dense diet for a long time alters important health markers, particularly arterial function, body composition and bone mineral density.

The findings suggest that large amounts of exercise do not compensate for a poor diet and may provide diminishing returns and prove detrimental to physiological function.

However, it's generally considered that the benefits of thru-hiking on both physical fitness and mental health outweigh the potential drawbacks. Anticipating injuries and illness and managing them while on the trail will lead to a healthier experience.

Canister stoves use a blend of propane, isobutane and butane gas to optimise vapour pressure

HOW DO BUTANE, ISOBUTANE, PROPANE AND WHITE GAS DIFFER?

Propane, isobutane and butane are classed as liquified petroleum gas (LPG) stored in pressurised gas canisters. White gas is classed as liquid fuel stored in pump-pressurised fuel bottles.

Most camping canister fuels use a blend of LPG gases to optimise 'vapour pressure': a fuel's ability to vaporise, keeping the canister pressurised at a given temperature. This also ensures the mix's stability in transportation and use.

"Specific gases have different performance and stability at different temperatures," says Sandy McLean from Ampro Sales, the New Zealand distributor of MSR stoves. "Optimising the mix of gases burnt governs the performance of a stove in varying environments safely."

A liquid fuel stove uses a pressurised fuel bottle to feed fuel to the burner head. "Because you're controlling the pressure of the fuel flow to the stove, you're in complete control of the stove's performance regardless of external influences such as temperature," says McLean.

Liquid fuel stoves work well in all environments and are cheaper to run but do need a little know-how.

"Canister stoves on the other hand are efficient and easy to use, but they don't always work well in challenging conditions," says McLean.

Why do I still sweat in a breathable raincoat?

Earth Sea Sky's David Ellis says the breathable laminate used in a jacket and the clothes worn beneath it contribute to how well a jacket 'breathes'.

A breathable laminate works on a pressure gradient. "It's physics, driven by the difference in water vapour pressure. The greater the difference between the two, the better it'll breathe. If there's weather where water vapour pressure on the inside and outside are similar, the breathing will slow down."

Walking up a hill with a pack in the rain, sweating profusely, increases pressure inside the jacket. The breathability of the garment is overloaded and condensation starts forming on the inside.

Ellis believes that what's worn underneath is the largest contributing factor and this is where synthetics can outperform natural fibres. "Wool doesn't feel wet or damp until it reaches 30 per cent moisture content, and it'll still continue to absorb moisture well beyond that which will hinder breathability. There are better performing synthetic fabrics that will only absorb a maximum of three per cent of their weight in moisture which reduces the condensation within the jacket."

FINDING STRENGTH IN THE WILDERNESS

July 2023

OUTWARD BOUND IS CELEBRATING ITS SIXTIETH YEAR IN NEW ZEALAND. IN MARCH, 48 YEARS AFTER COMPLETING A STANDARD 23-DAY COURSE, WILDERNESS REPORTER KATHY OMBLER RETURNED TO SEE HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

by
KATHY OMBLER

It's after dark in Torea Bay. We are relaxing on the lawn outside Outward Bound's Te Kainga cottage, where we are staying overnight. Or not, as it turns out.

"Tonight, you will sleep on the cutter," says instructor Kate Gloeggler. "First, you will need to row it out to the buoy. We will give you sleeping bags. You will need to be back at the jetty and dressed ready for physical training at 6.20am."

Our little group processes this bombshell. We'd assumed we'd be sleeping in the cottage. Our PT gear is still in our luggage. We are Sheppard Watch, Course 699, on the first of an eight-day Discovery course and our first discovery is that Gloeggler is good at dropping bombshells.

We later learn that she's just warming up. Gloeggler and co-instructor Stephen Kuni's 'surprises' are key to the mantra that underpins everything about Outward Bound: *plus est en vous* (there is more in you). It was a favourite mantra of Kurt Hahn's, the school's founder, and reminds us that no matter how great the hardship, how tired we think we are, we can do more.

But I knew this, from 1975. Why am I even here again? Blame the mid-winter blues. I needed a challenge. A kick. And as a writer, Outward Bound's 60th anniversary was a good story. So came the brainwave: why not do another course, be challenged, and write about it?

The challenge began the moment I signed up when it hit me that I was no longer that fearless, fit 21-year-old of 1975. I fretted about how I'd feel on those high ropes or if I'd keep up, tramping with younger watchmates. A daily run is part of the course. Due to a shonky knee I hadn't run for years.

Our course began at midday in Picton. It was not a gentle start. After handing over our cell phones ('digital detox' is a course requirement), we were sent on a 3km run then a swim to board the cutter, moored offshore. (Okay, two of us on a late ferry missed that fun, we caught up with a cushy boat ride direct to the cutter.) We'd spent a pleasant afternoon on Queen Charlotte Sound learning how to sail before rowing the big solid cutter with its long heavy oars into Te Kainga.

Kathy Ombler's Outward Bound class of 1975 – the author is third from right in the bottom row

ABOVE: School director Hamish Reid says much has changed at Outward Bound but the fundamental building blocks of resilience remain; RIGHT: Students learn kayak rescue skills

Sleeping on the cutter, as it turns out, was great. The stars were stunning, bioluminescence sparkled in the water, a seal splashed around us. It would have been boring inside. The group's bonding had begun.

On day two, after our early exercise and compulsory swim, stingrays scattering in the water around us, we sailed to Anakiwa, where a formal pōwhiri awaited. I felt a burst of emotion. My first Outward Bound course had hugely impacted my life. It had opened my eyes to outdoor adventure, and made me stronger. I was moved to be back.

School director Hamish Reid welcomed us. Ewan Potgieter, our just-appointed watch kaikōrero, responded and we sang an admirably confident 'Tūtira mai', possibly not the first watch to do so.

In 1975 there was no tikanga Māori at Outward Bound. Reid later told me he is proud of the school's formal relationship with local iwi Te Ātiawa.

"This means we feel more grounded and at home in this place, and better able to welcome students to Anakiwa no matter where they come from," Reid says. "The iwi also blessed us with a name for our new launch, the Rāhiri, after the hapū that once occupied the Anakiwa site. That was special. In return we're working hard to incorporate more tikanga Māori and te ao Māori into our courses."

Thus, along with our course's physical challenges, we also shared daily discussions based on te whare tapa whā, the four cornerstones of wellbeing: hinengaro (emotional), tinano (physical), whānau (family) and wairua (the spiritual dimension).

Guided by these themes, and by Gloeggler and Kuni, we talked about how we were coping. We shared our fears and doubts about the course and our lives back home. We trusted each other and bonded some more.

We didn't have these sessions in 1975. Reid said that mental and emotional wellbeing and resilience have always been central to Outward Bound, but in the past it was left to develop from the experience of physical hardship.

"Today we spend more time facilitating these discussions," he says. "Outward Bound was founded to help the survival of young merchant sailors. During World War Two, many simply gave up and died in their lifeboats after being torpedoed in the Atlantic. Today, instead of surviving in lifeboats, people are facing mental health challenges, a pandemic and a climate crisis. But the fundamental building blocks of resilience remain the same."

So here we are, Sheppard Watch, building resilience.

Day three starts with its usual jolt: 6.20am exercises, a 3km run, a swim in the sea and a cold shower, by which time we are wide awake and ravenous.

After breakfast we are back in the sea practising kayak rescues. This entails much head-under-water stuff, reliance on our partners to rescue us, self-rescues, and even more challenging exploits involving kayaks on the wharf that scare the heck out of me. We all survive.

> 'SURPRISES' ARE KEY TO THE MANTRA THAT UNDERPINS EVERYTHING ABOUT OUTWARD BOUND: ***PLUS EST EN VOUS*** – THERE IS MORE IN YOU.

The afternoon's high ropes course is marginally less daunting. I've done this before, though not for a long time, and even though we are double-clipped onto safety lines the adrenaline is coursing. To think, at 21, I ran around these ropes with not one safety line in place.

When it comes to safety, times have changed, says Reid. "Our courses need to provide authentic adventure and challenge, but we have to do that with contemporary safeguards in place," he says. Outward Bound is a registered provider under the Adventure Activity Regulations and undergoes regular external audits.

Instructor Stephen Kuni let students find their own way through challenges

This is a good thing, especially right now, because one of our group is approaching a small climbing wall. It spans a scary gap, high between two towering kahikatea trees. She's shaking, crying a bit. We call encouragement from the ground and she shows huge resolve to cross the wall. It's fascinating how something that scares one person can be fun for others. The key is that we all pitch in; for anyone struggling there is support at hand.

The ropes are done. It's been a long, challenging day and we are ready for a hot shower, dinner and bed.

But Kuni has other ideas. "Tonight, you're going to go up to that rocky knob," he says, pointing to a high ridgeline behind the school. He's not joking. "You'll need to get your packs, sleeping bags, gear and food. We'll give you a fly for shelter, and tomorrow you'll tramp around that ridge and back to the school. It's a beautiful track. Oh, and you'll need to be quick, you're on kitchen duty tonight. You'll go up after that."

Mā te wā all in good time – is another Outward Bound thing. We're told what we need to know when we need to know it. No advance planning here.

We pack. We have dinner. We do the dishes and mop the floor. Lovely chef Ruby slips us the leftover chocolate brownie desserts for a camp supper. Gloeggler gathers us up and we set off. Along the road, into the bush, up a steep track in the dark. We have headlamps. There are glow-worms. We walk an hour or two. We share loads. We carry way too much water. One of us, not used to tramping, says this is the worst day of her life. We get to the top. Gloeggler says goodnight and that Kuni will be here at 8am to walk back to Anakiwa with us.

→

Teamwork on the cutter

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LEFT: Instructor Kate Gloeggler, at left, has plenty of surprise in store; RIGHT: There's a huge sense of accomplishment at completing the high ropes course; BELOW: Kathy Ombler's camp for the solo challenge

We work together in the dark to erect the fly. All eight of us fit beneath it. It's not raining, yet. Our sleeping bags are really warm. We can see down the sound in the moonlight. It's quite beautiful, and kind of fun, all being up here together.

In the morning, Kuni arrives with a map that clearly identifies our return route to Anakiwa. After a cursory lesson about map and compass reading, he potters behind and lets us find our own way. (It has long been standard practice for instructors to shadow every group on tramping routes. Unlike in 1975, when we got seriously lost.)

We climb into beech forest, it rains, we climb some more, it gets misty and cold, we descend a forestry road, we taste some wild fuchsia berries. We realise we've inadvertently left most of our food rations behind, all the fresh stuff. But there's no time for lunch anyway because we are busy searching for the track to get back down. Forestry roads confuse us. We go back and forth and back up a steep hill. One of us is having the worst day of her life, again. It's raining again. Eventually, we look at our map properly and stumble on the little track. We eat biscuits as we bush-bash down the steep, muddy, overgrown trail. For several hours we slip and slide, some more than others, but everyone is covered in mud. We have to laugh.

We're back just in time for dinner and then settle with Gloeggler for the inevitable reflection. "What were you most proud of today?" she starts. But we are exhausted, not in the mood for the deep and meaningful stuff. Instead, the session morphs into laughter as we recount our mistakes and muddy episodes. We reduce Gloeggler to hysterics.

I'm proud of everyone. Lost, wet, hungry, we'd all rallied and here was our reward, the best belly laughs with this great bunch of people who'd been total strangers only four days ago.

"So, are you tired?" asks Gloeggler. Yes! "Are you ready now for a nice, long rest?" Yes! "Good, that is why you are going to pack your packs now because tonight you are all going out on solo. You will stay out for two nights."

IT'S BEEN A LONG, CHALLENGING DAY AND WE ARE READY FOR A HOT SHOWER, DINNER AND BED. BUT KUNI HAS OTHER IDEAS: "TONIGHT, YOU'RE GOING TO GO UP TO THAT ROCKY KNOB."

We did not see that coming.

"Your solo sites are about an hour's walk from here," she says. "You need to collect your rations and be ready to leave in 30 minutes."

Solo, on your own in the bush with basic shelter, minimal food, no phone, books or watch, is a well-known element of an Outward Bound course. *Plus est en vous*, this time, is focusing on the mental challenge.

We all survived solo. Some of us slept a lot, some cried a bit, one overcame her fear of the dark, another normally busy person embraced having 'permission to do nothing', and one was saved from despair by her weka companions, especially, she said, the cute black chicks. We wrote inspiring thoughts into logbooks. We enjoyed the peace, the birds, the stream rushing nearby and, afterwards, we enjoyed getting back together again. It was the same in 1975: after forging bonds with my watchmates as we'd faced adversity together, we were sad to be separated.

Walking back we laughed when other people, passing us on the track, asked what was in our 10-litre buckets, then perhaps wished they hadn't. For the record, the contents of our solo buckets contributed to the school's wastewater treatment plant and local wetland enhancement and kept the solo sites clean. It's a good system.

We're no sooner back from solo before we're off rock climbing. This is my happy place and I scramble, albeit with little style, up the rockface. Others resemble mountain goats (one is given a blindfold for extra challenge – it barely slows her down), while some struggle. We help each other, and everyone manages to touch that piton at the top.

Tonight we actually sleep in our bunkrooms but remain on tenterhooks until our course ends. What will be the next bombshell, and when?

We were all adults and one might ask: why would we acquiesce and do these crazy things thrown at us last minute? Because we'd signed up for it, is the simple answer. More importantly, because each time we really did learn that we could do more. In 1975 it was the same. A challenging three-day tramp that turned into four after navigational mishaps, when I thought I couldn't go on but had to, and did, has held me in good stead ever since. *Plus est en vous*.

My own tramping trips have often been physically harder, but at Outward Bound there was something deeper going on, drawing out sterner stuff.

Watchmate Ewan said the course gave him a fresh perspective on his behaviour at work and at home. "It also reset my thinking of my life purpose and how important it is to keep dreaming and striving towards my goals," he says. "It showed me that the seemingly insignificant, basic things in life are often the most important."

Emma Kelman said that after the course she felt calm. I could relate. There's definitely something calming about learning that you can tramp in the dark, hang upside down in a kayak, get lost, rely on others, climb the high ropes and digitally detox (which I'm still doing, largely. Cutting the noise).

As for pre-course concerns? Our ages ranged from 28 to 69 and it's fair to say we were all challenged, mentally and physically in different ways at different times. And through all those challenges, or rather because of them, we forged a wonderful supportive bond. And how we laughed. It's a good way to live your life. Thanks Sheppard Watch 699, and thanks Kuni and Gloeggler, for your surprises, and for your care.

TRANSFORMATION

When Outward Bound NZ began in 1962, it offered a standard 23-day course for young men aged 18 to 23. The first female course was in 1973. Watches were segregated until 1980.

Today, Outward Bound welcomes people of all ages, cultures, abilities and backgrounds. Courses range from five to 21 days and age groups vary. There is no upper limit. (In 2020 Rob Waldron, 84, completed an 8-day low-impact Inspire course)

Several courses cater for specific needs, such as intellectual or physical disabilities, mild physical conditions and early-onset Parkinson's. There is Leaps and Bounds, which teenagers share with a parent or caregiver. Mind, Body and Soul targets senior high school students. Professional and Women in Leadership courses are for business leaders. Journey – Te Waiau Toa is essentially a river journey, away from Anakiwa. The Southern Cross course targets young people from migrant backgrounds and includes input from the Human Rights Commission.

Accessibility is also important. Outward Bound's Ka Mahi scholarship programme aims to make these courses available to all New Zealanders, regardless of their socio-economic background.

And the school has grown. There are now 10 watchhouses, named after Māori and women leaders as well as early New Zealand and British adventurers. A recycling facility, wastewater treatment plant, energy-efficient water-heating systems and solar-powered drying rooms are part of the school's focus on environmental care and sustainability. Outdoor gear – packs, sleeping bags, wet suits, tents – is top quality.

One thing hasn't changed. The meals at the school are still amazing. All diets are catered for. Most of us bought the cookbook.

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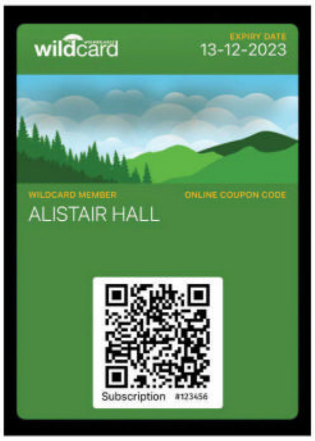

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If possible, activate your beacon early to help rescuers reach you in daylight hours

IAN SELWOOD, GREYMOUTH LAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

PLBs: THE GOLD STANDARD EMERGENCY DEVICE

No matter how careful you are, sometimes things go wrong. What's the best way to summon help?

by Heather Grady

ALWAYS TAKE communication equipment suitable for your trip; it could be a life-saver in emergencies such as injury, getting lost or bluffed.

With cell phone network provider OneNZ soon to offer full coverage throughout New Zealand thanks to the Starlink satellite network, some people are suggesting a mobile phone will soon be the only safety device you need to take on a trip.

However, rescue professionals still consider a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) to be the gold-standard device for an emergency requiring urgent evacuation. When activated, a PLB sends a signal to a satellite which transmits your exact location to emergency services. The signal doesn't provide the status of an emergency, but Search and Rescue personnel will treat it as urgent and get to you as soon as possible.

PLBs can be hired or purchased. If purchased, a beacon should be registered at beacons.org.nz. This process sets up your emergency contact. Make sure your contact person knows your intentions, because when your beacon is activated, rescue services will call them for details of your plans.

Before leaving home, check the beacon's battery expiry date, and test the beacon using the test function. Make sure you know how to operate it before you desperately need to do so. Carry the PLB on your body rather than in your pack in case you become separated from the pack.

Only use a PLB when rescue is required. Activate it if you think a search is likely to be underway, because it will show your location and reduce the time it takes for you to be found. If you send a false alarm, get a message to the NZ Rescue Coordination Centre RCCNZ (0508 472 269) or police as soon as possible.

When activating your PLB follow the manufacturer's instructions. You need a clear view of the sky for the device to connect with passing satellites. If you are under heavy canopy, try to find an open space in the trees. Move out of a hut or snow cave and point the aerial to the sky away from structures that may block a signal. If you are in a deep valley or gorge, aim it towards the highest point. There may be delays in the signal getting out.

A homing function on the beacon enables searchers to home-in on your location, so don't turn off the beacon until you're notified to do so by emergency services, even if the emergency resolves itself. Stay put until help arrives or you're advised to move.

Be prepared to wait. Conditions may be good where you are but not where rescue is coming from or through which a helicopter needs to pass. If a helicopter can't come all the way, it may drop a ground party to walk the remainder.

Each situation will determine the best time to activate a beacon. If possible, activate a PLB early in the day to give rescuers the best chance of reaching you during daylight. If a situation is unlikely to be resolved, don't wait until later in the day. At night it may be better to wait until daylight if doing so will not put you in danger. In a developing situation with deteriorating weather, it may be better to activate the beacon early while a helicopter can fly, rather than waiting until you are sure rescue is needed. By then the helicopter may be grounded.

Following use, turn the beacon off and get it serviced. The battery will need to be checked or replaced, or the device itself replaced.

Heather Grady is an instructor with Outdoor Training New Zealand

A SHORT LITTLE GUIDE TO

TIME CONTROL PLANS

BY RACHEL DAVIES

Trail times vary by person, but figuring out a general idea, then adjusting based on your pace and trip factors helps you plan more precisely.

Starting Point! Average speed on flat terrain with a pack ⇨ 3.2km/hr ✚ 1hr for every 305m of elevation gain

✚ Add 5 minutes of rest per hour on trail

Calculate!

$$\left(\frac{\text{Distance (kms)}}{3.2\text{(km/hr)}} + \frac{\text{Elevation}\uparrow\text{(m)}}{305\text{ (m/hr)}}\right) + (5\text{ min} \times \text{Active time hrs}) = \text{Total time}$$

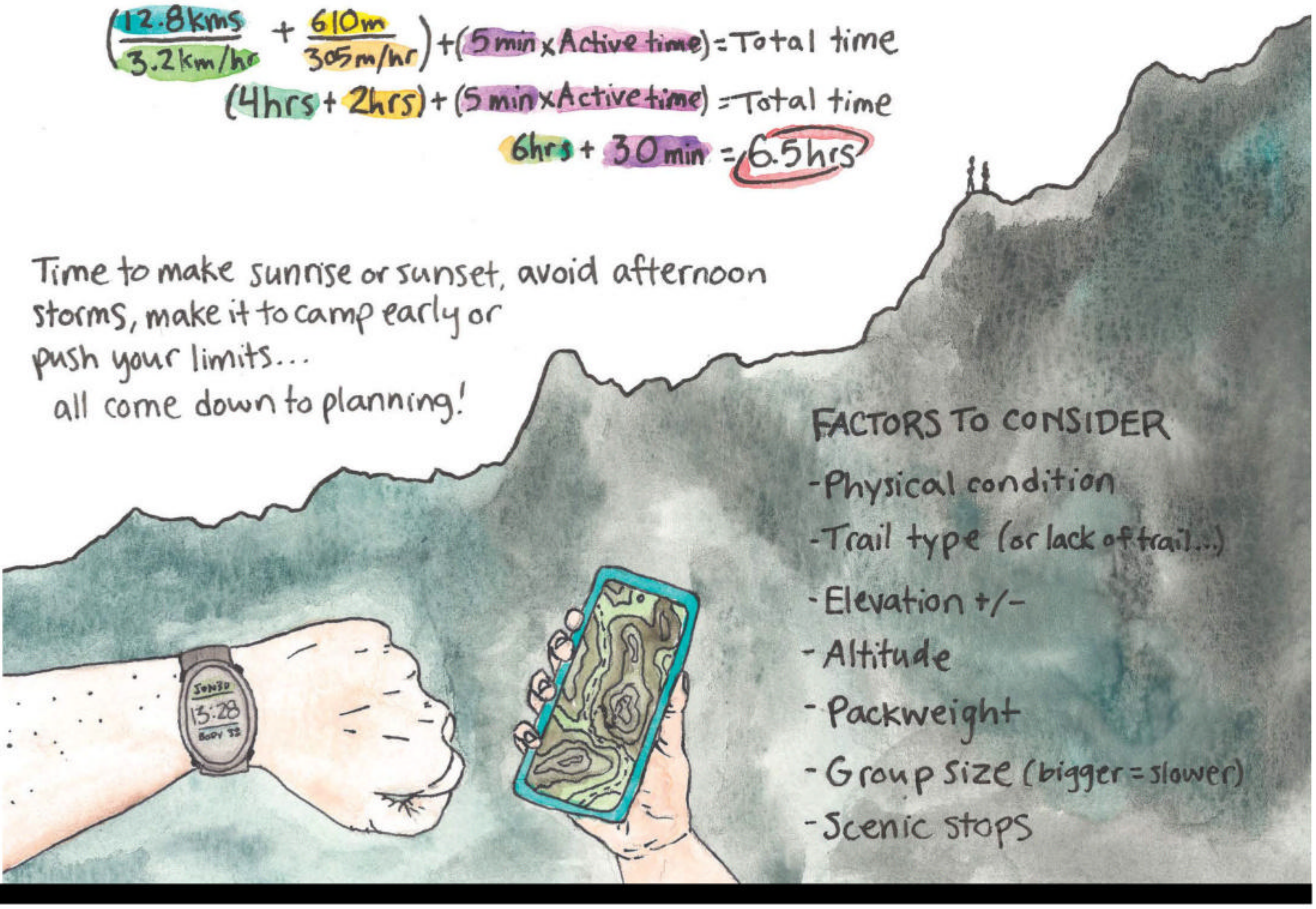
For example... a 12.8km trail with 610m of elevation gain

$$\left(\frac{12.8\text{kms}}{3.2\text{km/hr}} + \frac{610\text{m}}{305\text{m/hr}}\right) + (5\text{ min} \times \text{Active time}) = \text{Total time}$$

$$(4\text{hrs} + 2\text{hrs}) + (5\text{ min} \times \text{Active time}) = \text{Total time}$$

$$6\text{hrs} + 30\text{ min} = 6.5\text{hrs}$$

Time to make sunrise or sunset, avoid afternoon storms, make it to camp early or push your limits...
all come down to planning!



FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- Physical condition
- Trail type (or lack of trail...)
- Elevation +/-
- Altitude
- Packweight
- Group size (bigger = slower)
- Scenic stops

TRAMP DUMPLINGS IN SOUP OR SAUCE

These extremely filling and energy-rich dumplings can be enjoyed with different sauces or in a vegetable soup.

by Sabrina McCormack

PROFILE

Prep time: *15min*
Cook time: *5–10min*
Serves: *4*
Cost: *$8–$12*

DUMPLINGS keep and freeze well and can be prepared in advance at home, or carry in fresh ingredients and make a big batch on your first day to last for several meals. The base recipe makes a vegetarian-friendly meal to which optional chunks of meat can be added.

INGREDIENTS

Dumpling base

- **10 slices** of white bread ripped into pieces
- **1** egg
- Handful of fresh parsley (or dried equivalent)
- Approx ½ bag of breadcrumbs
- **1 small** onion
- Bit of butter
- **1tsp** pepper
- **1tsp** salt
- **1tbsp** paprika

Sauce

- 2 beef OXO cubes or brown gravy mix
- 200g mushrooms
- Bit of parsley
- Bit of butter for frying

Vegetable soup

- 2 carrots
- Handful of peas
- Other vegetables as desired (optional)
- 1–2 vegetable OXO cubes

METHOD

Dumplings

Soak bread pieces in some boiling water in a bowl and cover with a lid. Chop fresh parsley finely and gently fry in butter until it begins to wilt. Chop the onion into fine cubes.

Drain the bread and add chopped onion, fried parsley, egg, salt, pepper and paprika.

Mix by squeezing the mixture through your fingers until the bread pieces are really small and it becomes a homogeneous mixture. Add breadcrumbs a spoonful at a time and keep mixing till it becomes hard to squeeze the dough through your fingers.

Take a chunk of the mixture and roll it with wet hands into a golf-ball-sized dumpling. It should roughly keep its shape when placed on a plate. If it's too soft, add more breadcrumbs.

Heat some water in a pot. When almost boiling, add the dumplings.

Keep the water at a high temperature but don't let it boil.

The dumplings are ready once they start floating after 5–10min.

Sauce

Make the gravy according to instructions with beef OXO cubes or gravy powder. Chop the mushrooms into chunks and fry with finely chopped parsley in butter. Add to the ravy and cook for a few minutes. Pour it over the dumplings.

Vegetable soup

Turn carrots, peas and vegetable OXO cubes into a vegetable soup base. Add dumplings and let them simmer in the soup for 5–10min.

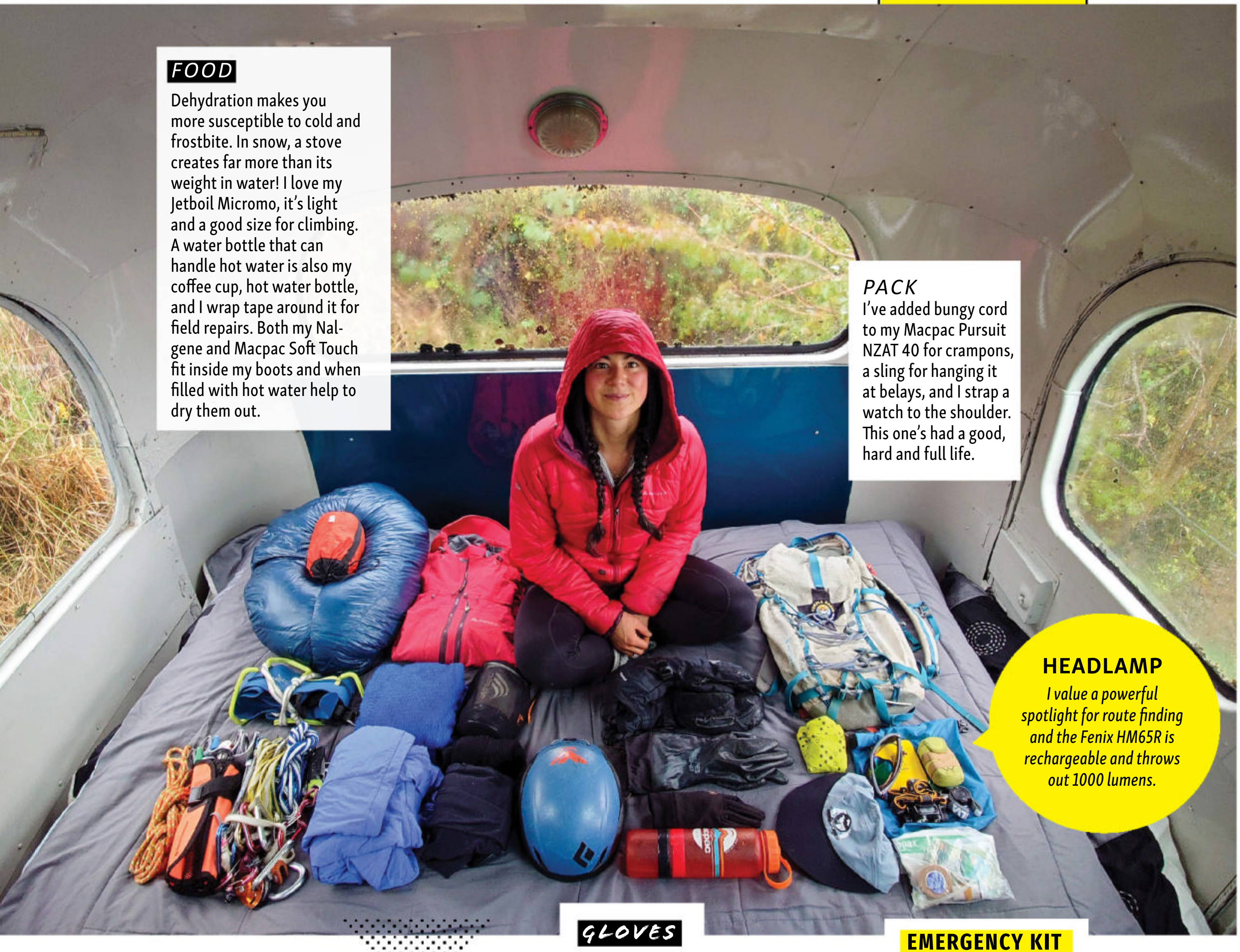
What's in MY PACK

Ice climber and NZ Alpine Team member

Sooji Clarkson

Sooji Clarkson loves technical ice and mixed climbing in alpine terrain. In her pack much of the weight and space is occupied by climbing hardware and ropes. Everything else is carefully chosen to be lightweight, small, and to have multiple uses.

"I try not to carry more than 20kg," she says. "I'm not a very big human and it definitely gets a lot harder for me over this. An ideal weight would be around 15kg, but that's usually wishful thinking! There's not much space for luxury extras once you add up all the ropes and technical gear, so going very lightweight on personal gear is important."



FOOD

Dehydration makes you more susceptible to cold and frostbite. In snow, a stove creates far more than its weight in water! I love my Jetboil Micromo, it's light and a good size for climbing. A water bottle that can handle hot water is also my coffee cup, hot water bottle, and I wrap tape around it for field repairs. Both my Nalgene and Macpac Soft Touch fit inside my boots and when filled with hot water help to dry them out.

PACK

I've added bungy cord to my Macpac Pursuit NZAT 40 for crampons, a sling for hanging it at belays, and I strap a watch to the shoulder. This one's had a good, hard and full life.

HEADLAMP

I value a powerful spotlight for route finding and the Fenix HM65R is rechargeable and throws out 1000 lumens.

TECHNICAL GEAR

For all-around axes on technical ice and mixed routes it's hard to beat the Petzl Nomic. For crampons, I use Petzl Darts. Weight and space considerations often mean I take a light alpine harness like the Black Diamond Couloir.

CLOTHING

If you must shelter in place, spare dry clothing will be a lifesaver. I carry a Macpac Nitro top, Prothermal leggings and fleece hat – the ratio of warmth-to-weight is excellent.

GLOVES

Ice climbing in Canada taught me to be very diligent with glove systems. Fit is important – extra material at fingertips is awful for fiddling with carabiners.
I take thin, dextrous gloves to wear when lead climbing, usually Macpac Dash. I also carry Showa Temres 282-02 commercial fishing gloves which are surprisingly well-suited to alpine climbing. The key is to swap the gloves when belaying, shove them down my jacket front, and belay in liner gloves and mittens. When I change back to the lead gloves, they are warm.

EMERGENCY KIT

If you or your partner's headlamp goes AWOL, a spare torch keeps you moving and hopefully avoids a long, cold night out. My Petzl eLite has been appreciated more than a few times. Spare sunglass lenses weigh nothing, but with some tape make replacement sunnies. You might not win a fashion show but preventing snow blindness comes first. My first aid kit includes GU energy gels – on a long descent I've definitely appreciated these!

DON'T KNOCK IT UNTIL YOU TRY IT

by
MATTHEW CATTIN

It's surprising how much stuff fits inside a bum bag

MATTHEW CATTIN

Poles, gaiters and bum bag – some of the gear that has won over Matthew

SOMETIMES THE GEAR WE'RE MOST SCEPTICAL ABOUT OWNING WINDS UP BEING THE MOST FAVOURED. HERE'S TO THE GEAR THAT'S WON ME OVER.

Have you ever ruled out gear before trying it, only to eat your words later? I have, so without further ado, here are my favourite pieces of kit I swore I'd never carry.

NOT JUST FOR WEARY KNEES

Walking poles are the ABBA of the hiking world. Both originated in Scandinavia and both have proved popular with anyone over 40. Yet they are panned – the poles – by macho males and a large portion of young people who think they're uncool. That was me – an ignorant upstart convinced poles were for trampers with dodgy hips and knees. I changed my mind after climbing the notoriously muddy Pirongia with a pair of poles borrowed from my mum. On steep, slippery climbs they provided crucial pull-ups, and on gnarly descents they were like a reassuring handrail. I've now got my own pair and have used them on nearly every multi-day hike since. I'm convinced they're the reason I've managed to avoid injury. Best of all, the reduced strain on knee joints will keep me tramping longer – gimme, gimme, gimme!

A NECESSARY ACCESSORY

Sometimes you don't recognise love until it's gone or – more accurately – been left in your car boot. Such was the case on a three-day river ramble in Whirinaki Forest. So excited was I to get walking after hours of driving, I rashly decided gaiters were unnecessary. Retribution was swift. I don't think there was a moment on any day I wasn't irritated by stones, leaf litter or river grit rolling about in my boots. The ongaonga stinging nettle that whipped the back of my legs only added further insult to injury.

I was a late convert to gaiters and tramped without them for more than a decade. Even after I inherited a pair from *Wilderness's* editor (thanks Alistair), it took me a long while to use them.

Gaiters provide warmth and protection to your lower legs without breaching the freedom provided by shorts. If well fitted, they'll keep water from your boots on brief river crossings. I've learned my lesson on gaiters.

A FLASH IN THE PAN?

Frying pans are a rare sight in huts, and every time I spot one it's cooking a meal I'm jealous of. I tried to fight the pull of the pan. I was proud of my lightweight pot set and tried in vain to use it to fry onions, mushrooms and garlic, but a pot is a pot and a pan it is not. Hiking pots are designed to boil liquid; anything else is liable to burn in seconds. Bringing a pan on a hike is a game changer – especially for group meals. From pancakes and pizza to sausages and stir-fries, the meal potential is massive. There are some quality hiking-specific pans out there that are lightweight, non-stick and designed to distribute heat evenly from the middle – ideal for small gas stoves. While my pan may not make it on longer tramps, it's an essential part of the camp kitchen for weekenders.

RETURN OF A RELIC

Not all 90s relics are lucky enough to enjoy a revival, but the humble bum bag has found a new niche in the outdoors. It was a piece of kit I never expected to own, but after spying a retro-looking Patagonia bag online at clearance price, I made one of my best impulse buys to date. I'm constantly surprised at how many useful items I can fit into it: keys, PLB, sunscreen, snacks, pocket knife, earplugs, hand sanitizer, and any rubbish I pick up on the trail. For photography missions, it's big enough to store a spare lens for my DSLR, and for summits or toilet stops, it saves diving into the pack to grab essentials.

2023's GUIDE to FLEECES

DEPENDING ON THE STYLE AND WEIGHT, A FLEECE TOP CAN BE WORN DURING OR AFTER AN ACTIVITY. LOOK FOR GARMENTS WITH RECYCLED CONTENT TO MINIMISE THE PRODUCT'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.

by Alistair Hall

Patagonia Nano-Air Light Hybrid $459.99

A part fleece, part insulated jacket designed for high exertion in cold weather. It features 40g of stretchy FullRange insulation, air-permeable fabric, fleece-knit panels and hand-warmer pockets. Fair Trade Certified sewn. 298g (m), 252g (w). www.patagonia.co.nz

Earth Sea Sky Helium II $329

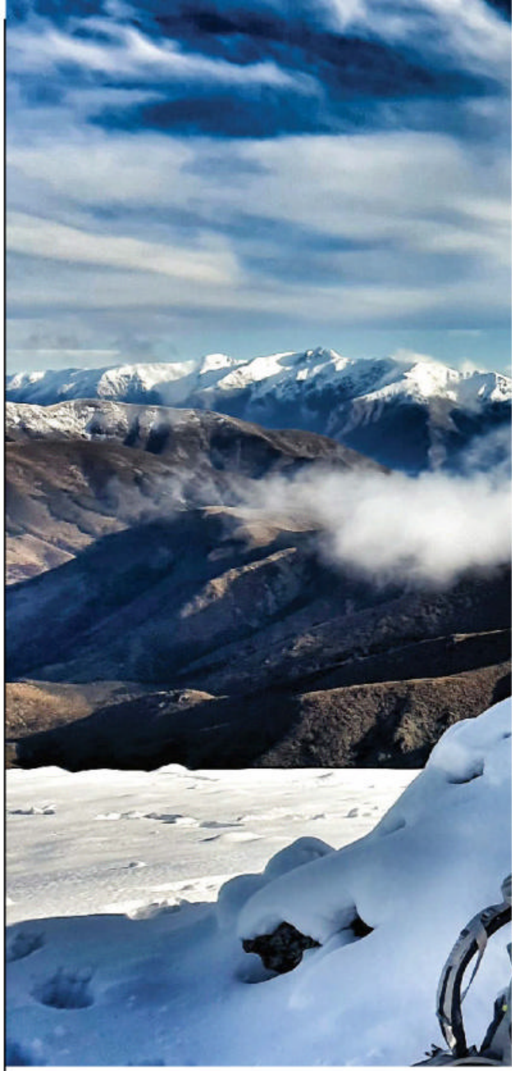
This jacket uses Polartec 200 Hi Loft fleece that is warmer and more compressible than standard Polartec 200. It has an anti-pilling and anti-shedding 'soft fur' construction. There's an internal front storage pocket and zipped handwarmer pockets. 560g (m), 490g (w). www.earthseasky.co.nz

The North Face Denali Fleece Jacket $330

A jacket using Polartec recycled fleece with a woven overlay on collar, chest and back of yoke and sleeves. There's a full-length centre front zip, secure-zip chest pocket and hand pockets, elastic binding on cuffs and an adjustable woven hem. www.thenorthface.co.nz

Outdoor Research Vigor Plus Fleece Hoody $299.99

A low-bulk, water and wind resistant fleece made from 93% recycled polyester. It features stretch panels, a highly-breathable high-loft grid interior, a chest overlay for added wind resistance and zippered hand warmer pockets. 527g (m), 473g (w). www.bivouac.co.nz



KAYLEE MCKAERE

A fleece will keep you warm during and after activity

FIT

A loose fit will allow layers to be worn underneath. A tighter-fitting fleece is used as a mid-layer.

ZIPS

THE FRONT ZIPPER SHOULD FLOW FREELY AND HAVE A STORM FLAP RUNNING BEHIND THE ZIP TO HELP BLOCK WIND AND PREVENT HEAT LOSS.

FABRICS

FLEECE JACKETS AND PULLOVERS ARE MADE FROM POLYESTER FABRIC AND SHOULD BE ANTI-PILLING. MANY GARMENTS NOW FEATURE STRETCH PANELS FOR INCREASED MOBILITY. FABRICS ARE OFTEN SOURCED FROM POST-CONSUMER WASTE AND RECYCLED PRODUCTS.

HOODS

Hoods provide extra warmth and are designed to be tight-fitting so they can be worn beneath a helmet.

Rab Alpha Flash $239.95

A jacket using highly breathable and moisture-wicking Polartec Alpha fabric. There are flexible fleece panels for mobility, YKK zips, chest pocket, flat lock low bulk seams, a half hem drawcord and it's treated with Polygiene anti-odour. 273g (m), 201g (w). www.outfitters.net.nz

The North Face Alpine Polartec 200 $230

A jacket using 100% recycled fabrics and with four-way stretch. There's an adjustable hem and woven overlays for added durability, reverse-coil centre front zip with a zipper garage, zipped hand pockets and a hem drawcord. www.thenorthface.co.nz

Merrell Sherpa Full Zip $229

A full zip jacket using 100% recycled polyester and double-sided brushed sherpa fleece with two-way stretch. It has two zipped hand pockets, rib knit cuffs and hem, and woven overlay at forearm. www.merrell.co.nz

WEIGHT

Heavier-weight fleeces are thicker and warmer and suited to very cold conditions. They may have reinforced areas to better cope with abrasion and wear and tear. Lighter fleeces are better as a shoulder-season garment or mid-layer where a more robust insulated jacket or raincoat is worn over the top.

WIND RESISTANCE

MOST FLEECES DON'T BLOCK WIND, THOUGH SOME COLDER-WEATHER GARMENTS MAY HAVE A WINDPROOF LINING TO HELP TRAP WARM AIR NEXT TO YOUR BODY.

POCKETS

Jackets and heavyweight pullovers will most likely have handwarmer pockets. Lighter garments designed to be worn as a mid-layer may just have a Napoleon chest pocket or no pockets at all.

Montane Protium XT Hoodie $199

The Protium is designed for active mountain use and uses temperature-regulating Thermal Grid stretch fleece. There's an under-helmet hood, full-length YKK front zip, zipped hand pockets and low profile seams. 425g (m), 355g (w). www.furtherfaster.co.nz

Rab Women's Nexus Hoody $179.95

A lightweight hooded midlayer made with 100% recycled Thermic G stretch fabric. It's quick-drying, breathable, has a close-fitting under-helmet hood and two zipped mesh-lined pockets. www.outfitters.net.nz

Marmot Drop Line Jacket $159.95

A breathable 100-weight fleece for walks and evenings outside. It has flat-locked seams that eliminate chafe and minimise bulk, zippered chest pocket, media port and zippered hand pockets. 496g (m), 435 g (w). www.marmotnz.co.nz

Mountain Equipment Lumiko $169

A quick drying stretch fleece designed for climbing, hiking and mountaineering. It features performance fabric, cover-stitched seams, grown-on hood, elasticated cuffs and a zipped Napoleon pocket. Fabric is Bluesign approved, 93% recycled polyester. 290g. www.outdooraction.co.nz

Merrell Women's Geotex Pullover Hoody $149

This is a four-way stretch grid-backed, moisture-wicking fleece pullover. It's made from 70% recycled polyester and has a kangaroo pocket and elastic bound hood, hem and cuffs. 280g. www.merrell.co.nz

Marmot Leconte Fleece Jacket $149.95

A jacket for active pursuits featuring a technical grid fleece that helps manage temperature by moving heat and moisture away from the body. There are two zippered hand pockets. 347g (m), 330g (w). www.marmotnz.co.nz

Rab Nexus Pull-on $139.35

A mid-layer garment for hiking, climbing and mountaineering in changeable conditions. It uses 100% recycled Thermic G stretch fleece offering breathability and quick drying. There's a venting half zip, close-fitting collar, zipped chest pocket and low-bulk seams. www.outfitters.net.nz

Kathmandu Ridge 100 PrimaLoft Bio Pullover $99.98

A midlayer polar fleece using Primaloft Bio 100% recycled fabric that will mostly biodegrade when disposed of in the right environment. It has a brushed fabric, seamless shoulder and sides, half front YKK zip and a chest pocket. 240g (m), 200g (w). www.kathmandu.co.nz

2023's GUIDE to WINTER TENTS

WINTER CAMPING CALLS FOR A SHELTER THAT CAN WITHSTAND STRONG WINDS, TORRENTIAL RAIN AND HEAVY SNOW. THE DURABLE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE TENTS MAKES THEM HEAVIER BUT WARMER THAN THREE-SEASON TENTS.

by Alistair Hall

FLY

SILICONE-COATED RIPSTOP NYLON FABRIC KEEPS RAIN OUT AND HANDLES STRONG WINDS AND SNOW-LOADING. STEEP SIDES PREVENT SNOW FROM RESTING ON THE FABRIC AND COLLAPSING THE TENT. THE FLY MAY EXTEND TO THE GROUND TO BLOCK LOW DOWN WIND. THERE WILL BE LARGE VESTIBULES FOR GEAR.

STORAGE

Pockets and suspended gear lockers can help to keep the tent tidy and provide easy access to essential items like headlamps.

POLES

The more poles the tent has, the stronger and heavier the shelter. Tunnel tents will have one crossover pole at the centre and usually at least two other poles providing structure. Dome tents offer increased strength against wind and snow loadings.

FLOOR

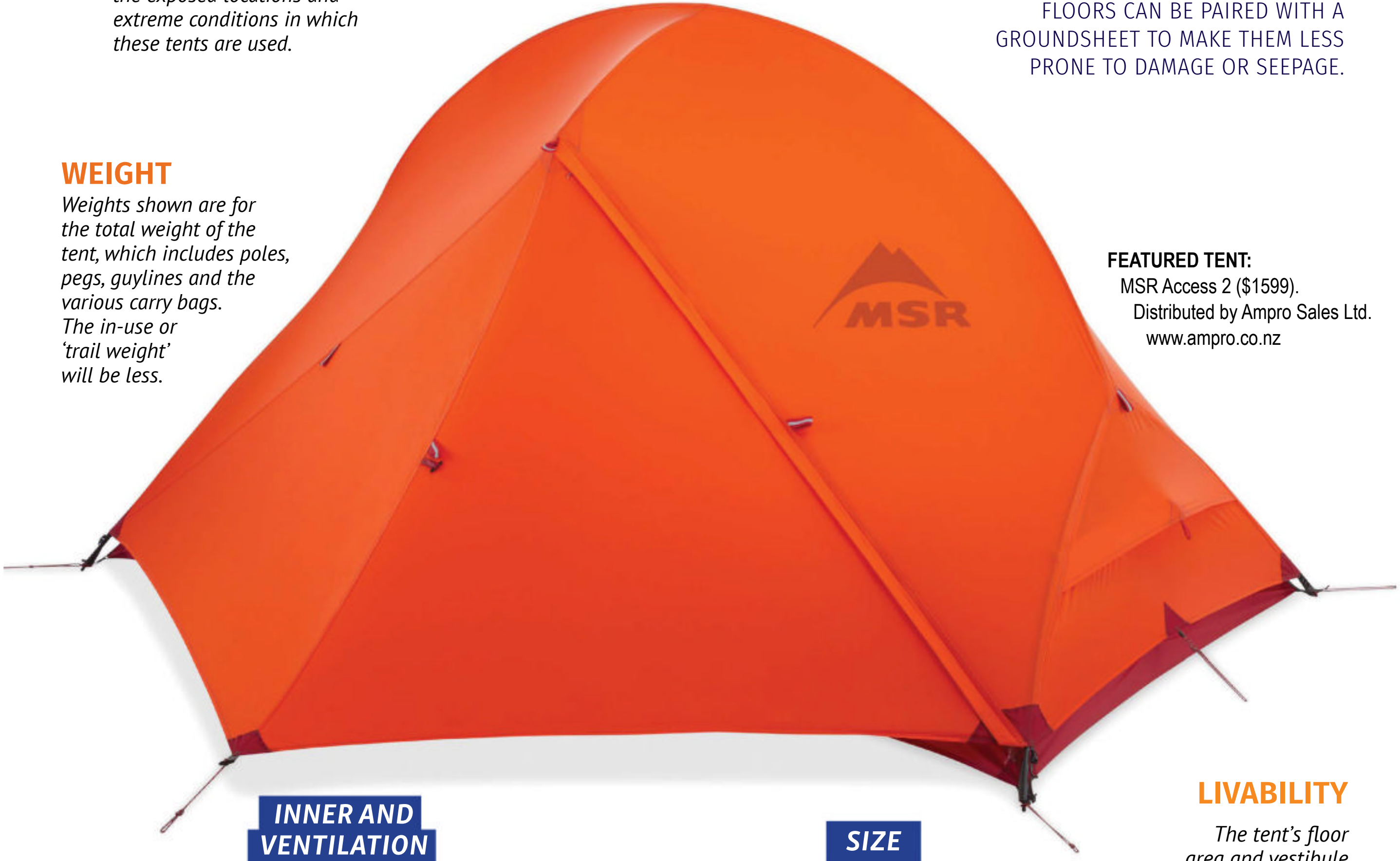
A HEAVY-DUTY FLOOR WITH A WATERHEAD RATING OF 10,000-15,000MM WILL PREVENT WATER SEEPING THROUGH. LIGHTER FLOORS CAN BE PAIRED WITH A GROUNDSHEET TO MAKE THEM LESS PRONE TO DAMAGE OR SEEPAGE.

GUYLINES

Multiple guyline attachments provide extra stability – essential for the exposed locations and extreme conditions in which these tents are used.

WEIGHT

Weights shown are for the total weight of the tent, which includes poles, pegs, guylines and the various carry bags. The in-use or 'trail weight' will be less.



FEATURED TENT:
MSR Access 2 ($1599).
Distributed by Ampro Sales Ltd.
www.ampro.co.nz

INNER AND VENTILATION

The goal is to trap warmth, so there will be minimal mesh on the inner. Airflow will be aided by mesh panels with a separate nylon backing near the ceiling or on the doors.

Most vestibule doors can open from the top which is useful if snow has accumulated around the base of the tent.

SIZE

Choose a tent for the size of your party: four-season tents use robust materials and are heavy, and any unoccupied space still needs to be warmed.

LIVABILITY

The tent's floor area and vestibule space indicate how much room there is inside. Clever pole geometry can create vertical walls and more headroom for a more livable interior.

THE NORTH FACE

The North Face Assault 2 FutureLight 2 $1900

This single-wall tent is designed to withstand harsh conditions and high altitudes. It uses breathable and waterproof FutureLight 3-layer laminate material and carbon-fibre Easton Syclone poles and internal pole construction to reduce pole-sleeve weight. The front door has a removable vestibule, there's an 'escape-hatch' back door, dual top vents and tabs for hanging gear. **Fabric** 20D FutureLight 3L nylon, 1500mm **Floor** 40D nylon ripstop, 3000mm **Poles** 3 **Area** 2.49m^2 **Weight** 2705g. www.thenorthface.co.nz

MSR Access 2 $1599

A two-person tent designed for snowy conditions with a support frame of Easton Syclone poles which withstand strong winds, resist snow loading and optimise interior space. There are two doors and vestibules. **Fly** 20D ripstop nylon, 1200mm **Floor** 30D ripstop nylon, 3000mm **Inner** 20D ripstop nylon, 10D micromesh **Poles** 2, Easton Syclone **Ceiling height** 107cm **Area** 2.69m^2, 1.62m^2 vestibule **Weight** 1980g. www.ampro.co.nz

Bach Apteryx 2 $1399.99

A multi-pitch two-person tent that can be pitched fly-first or fly and inner together. There is a large vestibule with a panorama opening and two zippered entrances, two vents, multiple guy points and a seam-taped floor. **Fly** 30D nylon **Floor** 40D nylon, 10,000mm **Inner** 15D air permeable ripstop nylon **Poles** 3, 7001 aluminium **Ceiling height** 115cm **Area** N/A **Weight** 2400g. www.colorado-traders.co.nz

Marmot Fortress UL 2P $1199

This is a crossover between a 3-season and expedition tent with a vented full-fabric fly and two half-mesh D-shaped doors that trap warmth. Features include pre-bent poles that create vertical walls for extra headroom, colour-coded clips and poles, lampshade pocket, additional guy outs, seam-taped catenary-cut floor, two doors and vestibules. **Fly** Polyester ripstop, 1200mm **Floor** Nylon ripstop, 2000mm **Inner** Nylon ripstop **Poles** 2, DAC Pressfit **Ceiling height** 106cm **Area** 2.8m2, vestibule 1.51m2 **Weight** 2110g. www.marmotnz.co.nz

Hilleberg Akto 1 $1151

A four season solo tent offering strength and versatility in extreme conditions. It can be pitched inner only or fly and inner simultaneously. Square ends provide extra space for taller users, the fly extends to the ground for maximum coverage. There's a mesh-backed door, foot end vent, above-door vent and pre-fixed guy lines. **Fly** Kerlon 1200, 5000mm **Floor** Nylon, 15,000mm **Inner** Nylon windstop **Poles** 1, 9mm **Ceiling height** 93cm **Area** 1.7m^2 0.8m^2 vestibule **Weight** 1700g. www.motomox.co.nz

WATERHEAD (HYDROSTATIC PRESSURE) RATING

A fabric’s waterhead rating measures its ability to resist water seepage and correlates with the durability of the fabric. Higher rating fabrics will be more waterproof and more durable. Winter tent flys are usually measured between 1200mm and 5000mm. Floors are between 3000mm and 15,000mm.

Wild Country Blizzard 2 $899
A two-person tunnel tent offering stability and space. It’s fully seam taped and the fly extends to the ground for extra weather protection. Tent and fly pitch simultaneously. There are multiple guy lines, 12 pegs, four storage pockets all in a low-profile aerodynamic shape. **Fly** 20D nylon ripstop, 4000mm **Floor** 68D PU, 5000mm **Inner** 68D polyester ripstop **Poles** 3 **Ceiling height** 85cm **Area** 3.3m^2, 1.05m^2 vestibule **Weight** 2350g. www.outdooraction.co.nz

MSR Front Range Tarp $799.99
This floorless tarp will shelter four people. It’s quick to set up using ski or walking poles and is light enough to carry as a solo shelter, dining hall, or emergency shelter. Xtreme Shield waterproof coating provides long-term durability. Optional Bug/Floor inserts available. **Fly** 20D ripstop nylon, 1200mm **Area** 7.52m^2 **Weight** 910g. www.ampro.co.nz

Sierra Designs Convert 2 $799
A versatile freestanding winter tent with a removable vestibule that can be left at home to save weight. Its mesh door and foot-end mesh window are backed by waterproof nylon. There are multiple guy lines and 15 pegs. **Fly** 20D nylon ripstop, 1200mm **Floor** 68D 210T Poly Ripstop DWR, 2000mm **Inner** 20D Poly Ripstop DWR **Poles** 3, Yunan UL **Ceiling height** 109cm **Area** 2.81m^2, 1.52m^2 vestibule **Weight** 2350g. www.furtherfaster.co.nz

Kathmandu Boreas 3 V2 $699.98
This is a three-person, all-season, multi-pitch, tent for use below the bushline. It has a strong geodesic shape, two doors and vestibules, a seam-sealed fly, breathable inner with water-repellent treatment and mesh screens. **Fly** 50D polyester ripstop, 2000mm Floor 150D polyester, 10,000mm **Fly** 40D nylon **Poles** 4 **Ceiling height** 115cm **Area** 3.9m^2 **Weight** 3980g. www.kathmandu.co.nz

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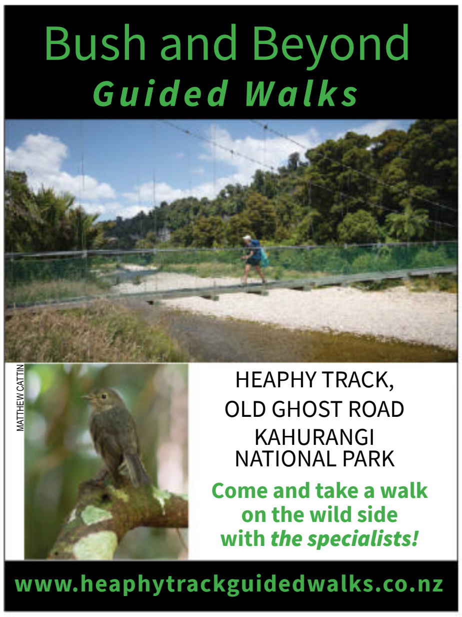

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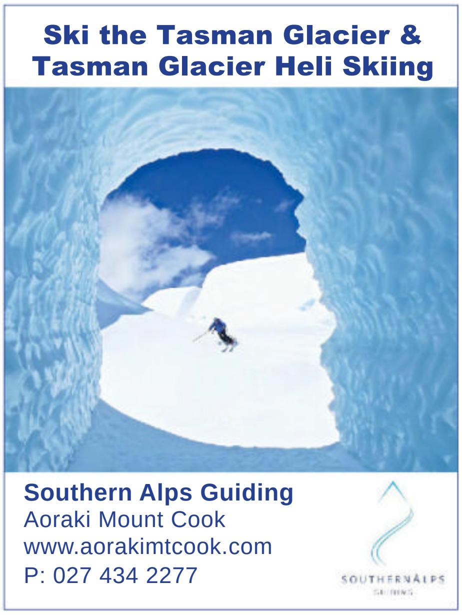

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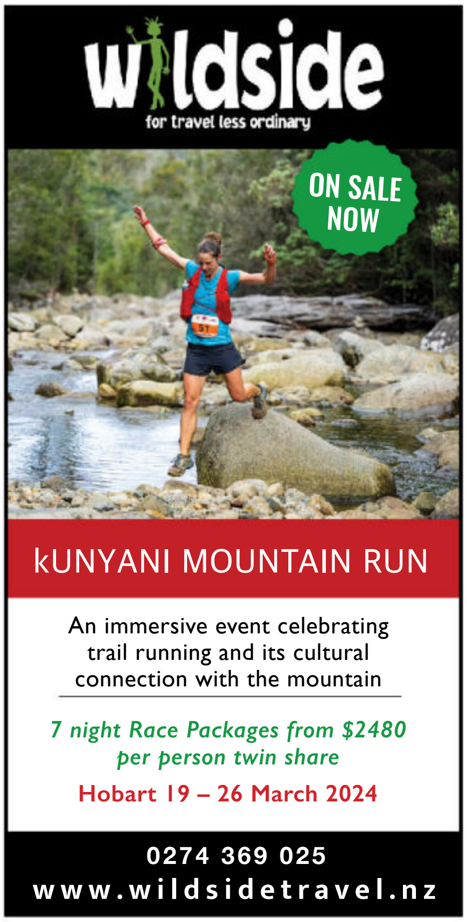
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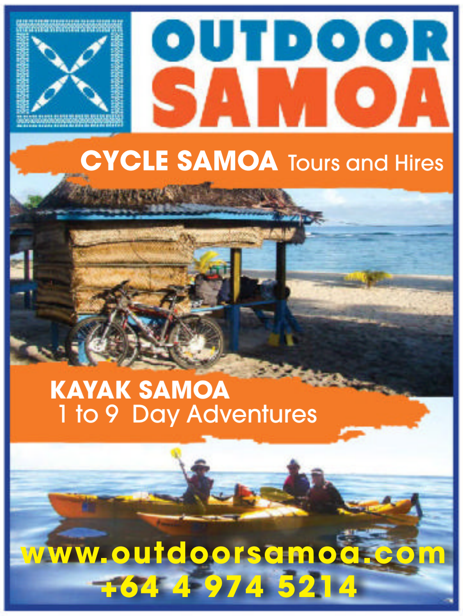
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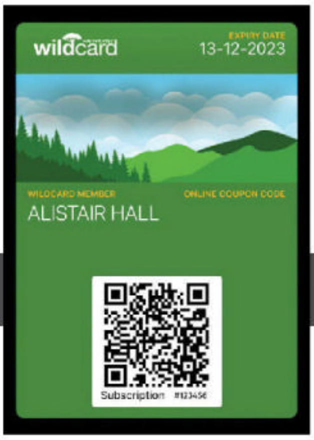
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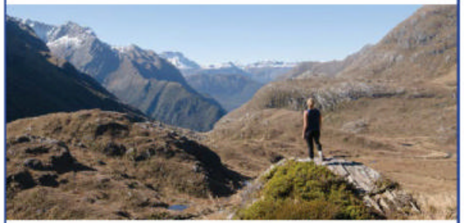
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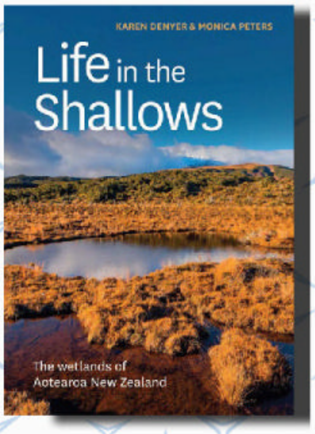
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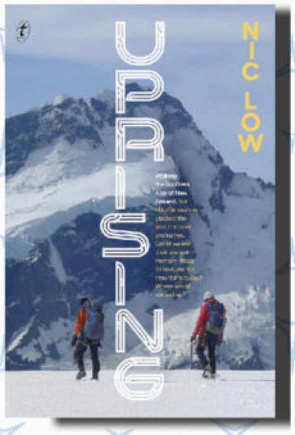
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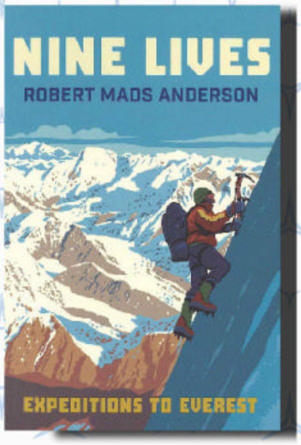
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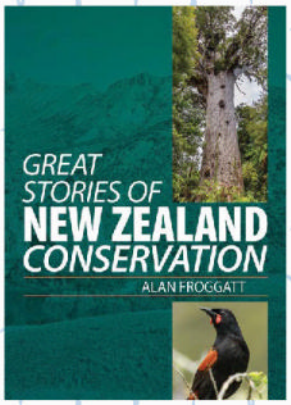
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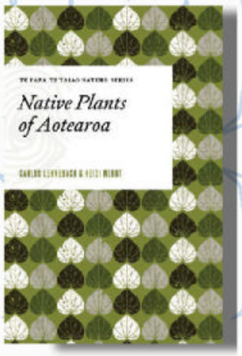
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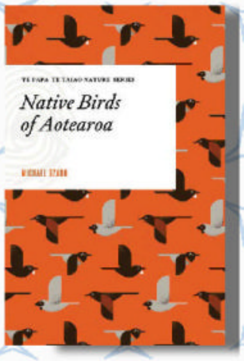
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WALK, WALK, WALK EVERYDAY

When it comes to short walks, Peter Janssen has literally done them all – and written about them. He's just updated his popular A Walk a Day guidebook, adding 100 new mini hikes. He explains why he keeps discovering new places to explore.

by ALISTAIR HUGHES

Why did you update A Walk a Day?

I've probably done around 1200 walks but I still find, or am told about, new ones. Councils are huge on developing trails, and new and upgraded walks are appearing all the time. So 30 or 40 entries have been significantly rewritten to reflect this, plus there are 100 new walks that were not in the previous edition.

How did it all begin?

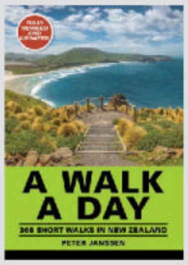
I realised that there were a lot of books about tramping and long trips but nothing about short walks. Publishers were dubious about the need for a book on walks that might only take a couple of hours, but I assured them that an awful lot of people were doing just that. And they sold well.

What is your criteria for a short walk?

I generally go under two hours. You don't need any special gear, although I always recommend that people have shoes with decent grip. And the walk has to be relatively easy to find, and follow.

I was pushing my way through blackberry exploring a potential new entry for the book in Canterbury, but realised: "No one is going to thank me for sending them here!"

> **I BELIEVE IF PEOPLE GET OUT MORE, AND EXPERIENCE NATURE, THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO WANT TO PROTECT IT.**



A Walk a Day (revised) will be published in August and is available on the Wilderness store. Subscribers get a 10% discount.

How do you make such brief excursions sound appealing?

I've found that you can talk someone into a 20–30-minute walk much more easily than a four-hour tramp. But I try to always have a highlight or feature that will appeal. It doesn't need to be spectacular, but it does need to have a point.

Who does short walks?

I've found that the walk books appeal to those who want to get out and about but might not be trampers. Or if they are, they might have visitors unfamiliar with the New Zealand bush, or perhaps want to do a walk with children or friends who aren't so fit. Tourists and new immigrants have a different concept of a forest walk, which in other parts of the world can be more like a stroll through a park.

Do you get responses from people who've walked your walks?

I got a letter from a man who told me he had been grossly overweight and unfit and wanted to get back in shape. Apparently his library had recommended my book as a way of doing this, and he worked his way up from 10–15-minute walks to an hour-long hill climb. He told me that he felt as if he'd conquered Mt Everest; it had opened up a whole new world for him.

New Zealanders respect our wilderness. Does this apply to shorter walks too?

I believe if people get out more, and experience nature, they are more likely to want to protect it. We have a very strong conservation ethos that cuts across political and social boundaries and is now part of being a New Zealander.

What's one of the best walks you've done?

I'd never heard of the Tavora Reserve, just north of Dunedin, until someone mentioned it to me. With its beach, headland and stunning views it actually turned out to be one of the most beautiful coastal walks in New Zealand.

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